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To my Pastor
Rev O. P. Rider.
Nov 6th 1909

n memory of your kindness
time of sorrow.
J. U.
Philoco Okla-

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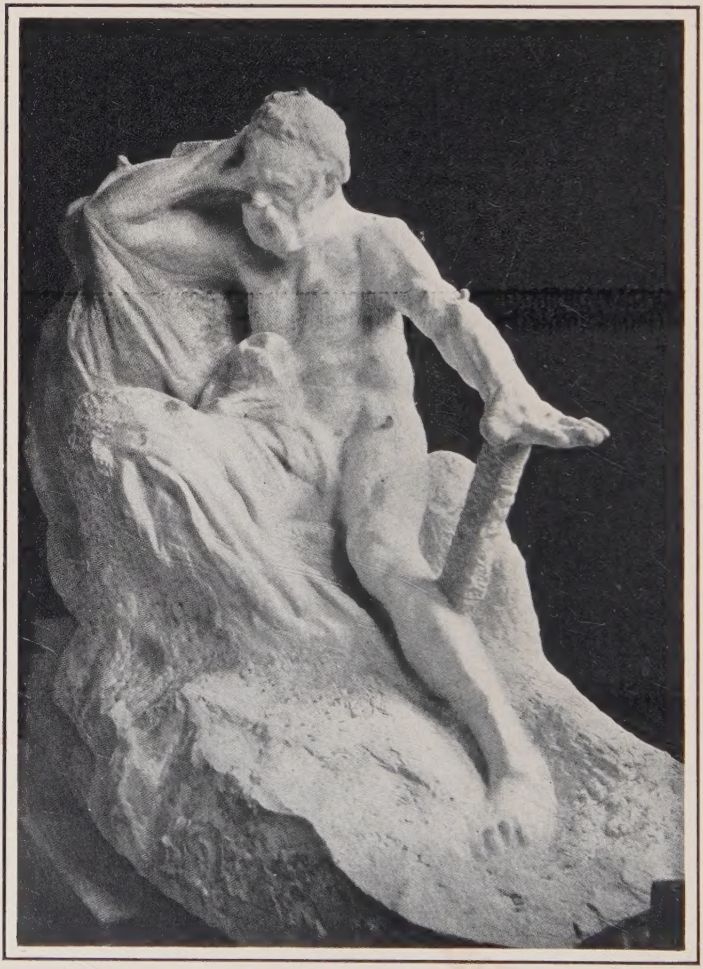
VICTOR HUGO'S
INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY



VICTOR HUGO IN EXILE

From the famous sculpture by Auguste Rodin

Victor Hugo's Intellectual Autobiography

(*Postscriptum de Ma Vie*)

BEING THE LAST OF THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS AND EMBODYING THE AUTHOR'S IDEAS ON LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

TRANSLATED WITH A STUDY OF THE LAST PHASE OF HUGO'S GENIUS BY

LORENZO O'ROURKE

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LAST PHASE OF VICTOR HUGO'S GENIUS

By

LORENZO O'ROURKE

Last Phase of Victor Hugo's Genius

THIS volume, composed of the last of Victor Hugo's posthumous manuscripts, constitutes in English an entirely new and unpublished work. Left with his heirs in the form of a bulky copy-book bearing the title "A Postscript to My Life," it dates from the exile, when the poet's health underwent a grave crisis which tinged with a certain melancholy his later writings. As indicated in the title the work has a personal character and is, indeed, a species of memoirs of Victor Hugo's intellectual life, revealing hitherto unknown sides of his genius and throwing new light upon his literary processes. Written in the solitude of Guernsey and embodying the ideas of his maturity, the book possesses unique value.

In these pages, which were not to be published until years after his death, he has revealed and set forth without reserve

his final conclusions on literature, philosophy, and religion. The book thus constitutes a valuable commentary upon his work as a whole. Closing the cycle of his immense literary achievement, which seems almost to span a century, it will bear comparison with his great prose. It is as if the golden trumpet-tones, so long stilled, were heard again from the Pantheon. In these pages we meet with new aspects of that familiar "Olympian" style, which is as individual in literature as are the sculptures of Michelangelo in art. This prose bears the stamp of the eagle's talon and has the eagle's breadth of wing.

Reserved by the poet's heirs as the chief memorial of the recent Victor Hugo Centenary, the book attracted great interest in Europe, where it was regarded as the most authoritative commentary which had yet appeared upon the personality of France's greatest poet. The fact that these literary self-revelations were not to be published until nearly twenty years after the author's death made possible a

certain freedom and abandon not found in his other writings. Freed from the embarrassing possibilities attending contemporary authorship, his thought here appears, as it were, in the nude. The book is the literary analogue of Rodin's striking statue showing the undraped Hugo in exile.

The first half of the volume is devoted to art and literature; the second half gives the author's matured and definitive convictions upon those subjects of his lifelong meditations—God, the soul, destiny, science, religion. As for the briefer writings, which have been collected and placed last in order in the volume—they are chips of the mighty workshop, detached thoughts on all sorts of subjects: history, politics, morality, the sentiments, love, woman, etc.

I

In these posthumous writings we have the work of Victor Hugo's ripe maturity. The exaltations of youth, the glorified fireworks of the "Orientales," the unrivaled triumphs of "Hernani," have become a memory. He has drunk deep of the purple chalice of fame, and its dregs have been exceeding bitter. Louis Napoleon, whom he is to gibbet upon his terrible pen, has driven him into exile. In addition to these sorrows is the rankling wound caused by his beautiful daughter's death by drowning. The serene optimism of his youth has undergone a shock, and the darker side of existence rises before his imagination. The first half of his life had been a series of unbroken triumphs. Famous at an age when most men of letters are undergoing their novitiate, he advanced from victory to victory. Calumny shriveled in the flame of his genius, and the day came when even the Veuillots and Nisards paid him tribute. At last

the doors of the Academy swung wide before him: he had carried by storm the classic citadel. Up to now we think of him as Fortune's bridegroom. Success has showered upon him its choicest laurels. He has made good that childish vaunt, "I will be Chateaubriand or nothing," and stands the acclaimed sovereign of French letters. It would seem that Destiny had definitively crowned her favorite, and that Victor Hugo, like Raphael and Vergil, was to enter immortality without passing through Golgotha. How futile such a horoscope was to be proved is known to all. The lightning of the *Coup d'état* came as from a clear sky, with blasting effect. He, upon whom coveted honors had been lavished like water, suddenly found himself friendless and proscribed, with a price set upon his head.

Banished first to Jersey, then to Guernsey, he was compelled to become a helpless spectator of the moral spoliation of his country. For a brief period he seemed stunned by the blow. Like the Titan of

his grandiose poem he had become the victim of all-powerful injustice, but Titan-like he was still unconquered. Apparently the usurpation of Louis Napoleon was a fatal misfortune for the poet, and his exile an irreparable blow to French literature. But destiny is often cruel only to be kind, and while seeming to rob us of our utmost hopes, it is in reality preparing us for the golden opportunity of our lives. Like Hamlet, Victor Hugo was to prove that "our indiscretions sometimes serve us well when our deep plots do pall." And, in truth, the divinity that was shaping Hugo's ends was propitious for his fame. It was exile that stirred the deepest fibers of his nature and revealed to the world those chords of bronze that had not yet sounded in his lyre.

What the world then beheld was the apparition of a new Victor Hugo, no longer serene and Olympian, but animated with the avenging anger that the ancients attributed to the elect of Apollo. Then was seen the spectacle of that antique and consuming wrath, that *sæva indignatio* which

had not been seen in the world since Juvenal and Antilochus. In the *Châtiments* there flamed forth the outraged wrath of a nation. In this mighty strophe one seems to hear the somber footfall of the seer of Patmos. It is as if the poet had written with a pen plucked from the wing of the dragon of the Apocalypse.

Victor Hugo issues direct from the people. He was born of a rugged ancestry from whom he inherited physical and moral qualities that stood to him through life. "He had a prodigious temperament," says Sainte-Beuve. "His barber told us that the hair of his head was triple the texture of that of others, and that it nicked his razors." He had the teeth of a deer wolf, teeth that could crack peach nuts. Flaubert declared him a force of nature with the sap of trees in his blood. This magnificent heritage of health came to him from his Vendean mother and his soldier father, one of Napoleon's generals of that type of physical manhood that

was able to conquer Europe. Sanguine vigor was the dominant physical trait. Health overflowed in him, and even in his old age his skin had not lost the ruddy tints of youth. His head was enormous and was widest at the top; his forehead, in the naïve phrase of his admirers, was "monumental" and indicative of the imaginative faculty which in him approached the verge of the miraculous.

His passion for knowledge and for expression developed early. At ten his prodigious appetite for learning reveals itself. Chance places a small library at the disposition of the family, and the child proceeds to devour poetry, travel, romance, science, pell-mell. It is interesting to note this early dawn of that curiosity which resulted in his amazing erudition. At fourteen he translates Vergil and at the same time utters the memorable vow about Chateaubriand.

Chateaubriand, in the early years of the century, was the autocrat of French literature. He was the sun that attracted and dazzled the young eagles of

the Romantic group. Hugo, at first Royalist and religious, was not immune from the general fascination exerted by the author of "The Genius of Christianity." At seventeen he comes under the spell of the "Master," and, glutton-like, absorbs in a short time the whole of his work. Fascinated and exalted by these glowing pages saturated with fresh and vivid images direct from nature, the young literary enthusiast is seized with emulation, and it is safe to conclude that at this time was born in him that dream of fame which was to be so amply realized. His admiration for the literary idol finds expression in an ode in which he compares Chateaubriand to Homer. He is eager to be presented to the great man and actually gains an audience. There is a graphic account of the incident in "Victor Hugo Raconté":

"M. de Chateaubriand affected a military gait; his neck was held stiff by a black cravat which concealed the collar of his shirt; a black redingote buttoned to the top held his small bent body in an upright position. The fine part of him was his head,

disproportionate to his height but noble and grave. The line of the neck was firm and imperious, the eye had a proud expression, the smile was charming but brief as a glance, the mouth quickly resuming its severe and haughty expression. 'Monsieur Victor Hugo,' said he, 'I am delighted to see you. There are in your recent verses passages that I have little liking for, but what is beautiful is very beautiful.' The praise was not gracefully worded, but there was in the attitude, in the inflection of the voice, in that air of conferring rank, something so sovereign that Victor felt diminished instead of exalted. He murmured an embarrassed reply and wanted to withdraw."

Were the writings and personality of the great author destined to leave a permanent imprint upon the mind and work of the young admirer and would-be disciple? In some degree undoubtedly. The noble and stately rhetoric of Chateaubriand, the descriptions full of life and color, breathing a new spirit into French literature, undoubtedly had a beneficent influence upon the younger author. But this influence was only formal. It left no permanent traces. The time will come when he will permit himself contemptu-

ous words in speaking of the object of his young idolatry. The truth is that Hugo's genius is of so original a cast that he can not be said to have been vitally influenced by any one. He, himself, had the obscure consciousness of this from the beginning, and while his reading was enormous, embracing the classics of all literatures and ransacking antiquity and the Middle Ages, it is impossible to point to any single author or school that seriously influenced his thought or style.

So much has been written concerning the French Romantic School that it seems idle to pursue the subject further. George Brandes, in his "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature," gives the most recent criticism of the movement. Its origins, it may be observed, are involved in considerable dispute. Some critics aver that it is by no means a recent phenomenon, and that its beginnings may be traced back several centuries. It is rather an arid controversy on the whole. Romanticism, as the popular consciousness has conceived it, is a very

simple thing. It was practically the creation of a single man, and it literally may be said to have sprung, Minerva-like, from the brain of Victor Hugo.

He might have said: "*Le Romantisme, c'est moi.*" It was an extraordinary epoch that was ushered in by the early writings of Hugo. Gautier has described it in burning words:

> "What a wonderful time! The Preface of 'Cromwell' flamed before our eyes like the tables of the law on Mount Sinai. It is difficult for the present generation to form any idea of the state of our minds at this time; there took place a movement comparable to that of the Renaissance. A new sap was in vigorous circulation; everything germed, budded and burst forth at the same time. The flowers breathed perfumes that made one swoon, the air was full of intoxication, people were mad with lyrism and art. It seemed as if we were about to rediscover the lost secret. And this was true, for poetry had been rediscovered!"

What stamps the work of Victor Hugo with unique significance is the fact that he is a primitive genius appearing at a

modern period, and confronting the age of science. But instead of being emasculated by contact with a highly developed material civilization, his powerful genius has dominated and absorbed that civilization, which, entering the crucible of his imagination, emerges transformed and transfigured. Thus epic poetry, which hitherto has been identified with naïf ages, is seen to reappear at the choice and master epoch of science, which, far from being fatal to it, has given it new wings and infinitely widened its horizon.

Out of the rich, plastic and multicolored French language he forged an instrument adequate for the expression of his grandiose conceptions. All the ends of the world have come upon his prose—Gothic grandeur, French suppleness, Latin strength. He is the inventor of a French of his own, which has enabled him to give expression to unheard-of conceptions and ideas. It is difficult to describe this incomparable style in which, as in the marbles of the great Florentine, expression circulates. How can one adequately

characterize this prose in which the lightning of the word is wreaked upon expression? Brandes has attempted it thus: "We feel as if the poet had actually seen all and painted all with a brush like that fire which Heine would fain have torn from the Norwegian cliffs and dipt in the fire of Etna to write with it the name of his beloved across the expanse of heaven."

The seven-stringed lyre of Greece had sufficed for Racine and Corneille and André Chénier, but Hugo fashioned for himself a mighty organ whose gamut ranged from the pipes of Pan to the trumpet of the Last Judgment. From this instrument he was able to call forth hitherto unheard-of harmonies: the lyric sweetness of the "Orientales," the mournful notes of "L'Année Terrible," the epic strains of "La Légende des Siècles," the melting music of "Les Contemplations." Interwrought with these are echoes of primeval harmonies that have floated down the ages: the songs of Babylon, the seductive psaltery of the East, the wild music of nomad hordes. This

music, at times ravishing, can become terrible. It is when the composer changes to the minor key that his mastery of all the chords of harmony becomes apparent.

The ordinary resources of language are not sufficient for his formidable imagination. It is not enough to have ransacked ancient and modern tongues for the means of adequate expression. Common words passing through the alembic of his imagination have become transfigured; thus, "The well of the abyss," "The dull roar of mighty nature," "The shiver of the constellations." A veritable Midas of language, everything that he touches turns to gold. It was Byron who said that words are things, but Hugo's words are living things.

His work is an ocean into which have passed all the waters of the world's poetry and whose waves break upon all the shores of thought. Those who have read only the prose works of Hugo have known but one side of his genius, and not the most important one. It is in his poetry that his originality has attained supreme expression.

For, however great his achievement in prose, it is as a lyric poet that he has distanced all rivals, and has raised question among critics of weight, like Dowden and Swinburne, whether he is not the greatest lyric poet of all time.

II

However astonishing the achievements of Victor Hugo's early period, it is the work of his ripe maturity which possesses most interest for us and reveals in its highest reaches the unique quality of his genius. Hitherto his experience had been bounded by the artificial life of Paris and his knowledge of history had been gained from books. It was contact with the magnificent scenery of the Alps which revealed to him original powers hitherto unsuspected even by himself. The austere beauty and sublimity of the mountains, with their contrasts, lights, and shadows, the illusion of a primitive world inhabited by Titans, the sight of un-

dreamed-of sunsets, "avalanches of gold crumbling in the sky"—all these produced in him a species of exaltation, of rapture. He became "a divine-intoxicated man." Like the ancient prophet he encountered the Elohim in the mountains, and the memory of that encounter was stamped forever upon his life and work. From the moment the mighty volume of nature was unrolled before him he realized the futility of mere formal learning. Henceforth this living Bible will be his sole concern.

It is therefore from the period of his discovery of nature in its magnificent phases in the Swiss Alps that we are to date the awakening of that formidable imagination for which there is no parallel in literature. Futile as the task may seem, let us endeavor to arrive at some conception of what this imagination was like.

At certain seasons in perfect weather one may see masses of soft, snowy clouds drifting silently in the clear azure, their contours ever changing, and suggesting

to the gazer a thousand memories and fancies: airy mountains, snowy castles, triumphant galleons, Alps of faery, formidable human profiles, helmed Titans advancing with their airy hosts to the storm of heaven. One looks in amazement at his living dream. Those Himalayas of the air suddenly have become gorgeous palaces, those empyrean argosies have been transformed into a bivouac of the air, that Titan has become an archangel at the head of winged hosts. Imagination has been at work and built all these wonders out of vapors and airy nothings. This magic faculty, this supreme gift of the poet and artist, sometimes achieves prodigious proportions: the result is an Apocalypse, a Sistine Ceiling, a Divine Comedy.

This power of creative imagination, exhibited feebly in the vision of the cloud gazer, is the characteristic trait of Victor Hugo. And the important point to observe is that as his ideas and work mature it becomes the constant habit of his mind. Fichte's metaphysical doctrine of the

mind creating its world here receives something like literal illustration. Thus to the vision of Victor Hugo the outward world undergoes a species of transfiguration. To his eyes the world appears as a sort of titanic Turner landscape, transfigured with mystic light and beauty, full of the radiance and wonder of the unknown. It is not a real world; but it is immensely more interesting than reality, and we willingly lose ourselves in its mazes as in some fairyland whose existence we have had a dim prescience of in dreams.

The two ideas which dominate Victor Hugo's imagination and are the most potent source of his grandiose visions, are light and darkness. These two realities, which at the same time are mysteries, seemed to him the supreme expression of that antithesis which is at the root of all philosophies. Light represents life, happiness, goodness, the ideal. Darkness is the symbol of evil, baseness, death. It is the ancient conception of Ormuzd and Ahriman transformed in the prism of a

powerful modern imagination—the conception of the rival powers of light and darkness struggling for the empire of the world. But it is a conception that receives enormous amplification from science; for it must be remembered that Hugo is the first epic poet that has appeared in the world since Copernicus. Victor Hugo's poems, his hymns to Light, are comparable to those of Milton and Dante. His descriptions of the world of darkness merit higher praise. In this domain, peculiarly his own, he stands unrivaled.

It is very curious to study the images evoked in his mind by night and darkness. Many poets before Hugo have given picturesque expression to the terrors of the night. The emotions evoked by darkness have found vivid expression in all literatures: but heretofore the metaphor corresponding to these emotions has been vague and indeterminate. Victor Hugo's images, on the contrary, are precise and clear-cut. He sees, as it were, the contours of the darkness. For him

Night is peopled with palpable forms. It is the antithesis of the world of light, and in accordance with the philosophical principle ever dominant, it is also the world of evil. In these regions, where light never penetrates, Satan holds sway over a universe in which all living things mourn in ashes, and where beyond the din of life and breath and sound "a frightful black sun radiates night."

The striking originality of Hugo's word pictures, the violent imagery, the prose magic of his literary expression, transcending all known feats of word wizardry, suggest a peculiar question. Is it not possible that he saw *differently* from other men? Is it not likely that his unique impression of the outward world was gained by a sensorial process different in kind from that of others? The scientific study of genius in its highest expression has revealed strange facts. In fashioning such men as Michelangelo, Napoleon, Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, Kant, Mahomet, it would seem as if nature, resolved upon original creation,

had broken and discarded her ordinary mold. Genius in its supreme expression seems almost unrelated to ordinary human achievement. Its very name indicated this. What stands out as the prominent and distinctive trait of genius is the creative faculty, and here this term is not used figuratively as it must needs be in its general application, but literally, as signifying actual creation. Ordinary human ability, talent, merely recombines and interrelates: it never creates. That function is held in reserve for the rarest of nature's products and in its highest type, as Schopenhauer says, appears but once or twice among millions of human beings in the course of several hundred years.

It is this creative faculty that Victor Hugo possest to so remarkable a degree as to astonish his contemporaries and puzzle his critics. "Violent sorcery" is the phrase that Taine applies to his style.

All attempts to confine the genius of Victor Hugo within the limits of defini-

tion are foredoomed to failure. The imaginative and creative faculty arrived at these proportions eludes the cold processes of critical analysis. Nevertheless, scientific criticism, spurred to emulation by the achievement of Taine with regard to Napoleon, has attempted to solve the enigma of Victor Hugo. And while the effort has not been crowned with complete success, it has resulted in throwing much light upon Hugo's marvelous psychological processes. Taine, it will be recalled, was the inventor of that process of intellectual dissection which inaugurated an entirely new school of literary criticism.

Taking advantage then of the critical apparatus inherited by Taine from Montesquieu and Stendhal, and carried to even further perfection by Taine's own recent disciples, let us make an attempt to penetrate the secret of Victor Hugo's genius—or, if not to pierce to the heart of the mystery, at least to get in closer contact with the secret sources from whence emanated his marvelous visions.

And first of all let us glance at one of the conditions that Taine considered of prime importance in the study of genius—the *milieu.*

It would be difficult to exaggerate the significance of the nineteenth century in human history. In his recent work "The Wonderful Century," Alfred Russel Wallace, almost the great Darwin's peer, has given the authority of his name to some extraordinary pretensions. He asserts that the nineteenth century is not to be regarded merely as standing out distinct among the others, *primus inter pares.* Its significance is of a higher order. In this scientist's opinion the nineteenth century outweighs in value and importance *the whole eighteen preceding centuries.* At first blush this looks like an amazing claim. Let us glance at it in the perspective of history.

It is the opening of a new act in the human drama, and its prelude has been the French Revolution. It is the period when modern democratic civilization, having attained its full current, is sweep-

ing the world toward complete destinies—when democracy, hitherto on trial, has to a certain extent triumphed in civilized states. It is the time when knowledge and scholarship, having passed to the people along with political power, have parcelled out the world of thought without regard to former aristocratical pretensions or authority. It is the time when choice and master-spirits of the age are garnering the first fruits of modern science. The epoch for which whole centuries were in labor has come to birth. The eighteenth century, however memorable in the history of thought, was an epoch of destruction. Voltaire, whose prodigious figure bestrides that century, was after all an intellectual Attila sweeping clear the path of progress but leaving little of constructive value. It is therefore the century just passed into history which is likely to be read by the future in letters of light.

It is a curious illustration of that species of irony which runs through history that the most typically modern of civil-

ized epochs should have produced two men of epic mold. By a paradox not inconsistent with the mysterious workings of the Genius of History, it is the nation and the century which have had the greatest share in annuling the influence of the past that have produced Napoleon and Victor Hugo.

The achievement of each is stamped with an originality that puts rivalry out of the question. Thirst for glory, limitless ambition, and an enormous capacity for work were the endowment of each. Both emerged from obscurity and attained the pinnacle of fame. There is a resemblance even in their grandiose vanity. Napoleon, quite naturally, compares himself with Alexander and Cæsar, while Victor Hugo naïvely claims brotherhood with Æschylus and Dante. Here the resemblance ends. The ideal and temperament of the two men are as wide apart as the poles. But the trait which the two have in common is significant and of the highest interest. Both were men of antique stamp; that is to say, they belonged

to a species which the modern world no longer produces. Taine has shown that Napoleon was a man born out of time, the "full brother of the Cæsars and the Borgias," a man out of harmony with modern ideals.

Victor Hugo's personality as revealed by modern criticism is quite as startling. He is a primitive genius of the Homeric strain, upon whose ideas have been engrafted the conceptions of Copernicus and Darwin. As Napoleon by sheer force of personality overlaid with the glamour of antiquity a modern democratic age, Victor Hugo by the force of imagination transformed into a period of unrivaled literary splendor the age into which he had been born. One thinks of him as of Napoleon. He is not merely one of the kings of thought presiding over a definite realm of letters, but, like Napoleon, is a born emperor fit for the laurel and the iron crown of utter sovereignty. And like the Corsican who always made the accomplished fact the scaffolding of a higher enterprise, he is ever mounting. To

be great is nothing. He must be greatest. One after another he conquers all the departments of literature, lyric poetry, the drama, the novel. Accredited sovereign of French letters and crowned with a literary fame that had not been seen in the world since the days of Voltaire, he is still unsatisfied. He fixes his eyes upon those peaks of song that no Frenchman ever yet had scaled.

It was Goethe who said that the French were lacking in the epic strain. Varied and brilliant as were the achievements of French literature, it has as yet produced no epic poem. Greece has its "Iliad," Rome its "Æneid," Italy its "Divine Comedy," Spain its "Romancero," Germany its "Niebelungen Lied," England its "Paradise Lost," Portugal its "Luciad." What had France to show? Nothing but the "Henriade," a piece of epic pastiche. Hugo was determined that that taunt of Goethe should no longer stand. He produced "The Legend of the Centuries," the epic, not of a nation but of humanity—a prodigious poem span-

ning the ages, beginning with the Garden of Eden and ending with the trumpet of the Last Judgment. Gautier has compared it to an immense cloister, a species of *Campo Santo* whose walls are covered with frescoes painted by a giant artist who possesses all styles, passing at will from the rude Byzantine of Orcagna to the Titanic audacity of Michelangelo. The subject of the poem is humanity traversing the various stages of its long journey, and ever emerging out of darkness toward the light. It is human history seen through the lens of a prodigious imagination.

In reading this poem one thinks of Hugo as of some Titan sculptor of an antique world blocking out his vast conceptions not with a chisel but an ax, quarrying out of virgin granite and marble the forms that haunt his grandiose dreams.

He is in truth the Michelangelo of modern literature, carving in the Pentelic marble of the Ideal or modeling in somber bronze, and like his great prototype chiseling his statues larger than life.

Like the great Italian he is a "divine intoxicated man," his imagination obsessed by sublime visions. He belongs to the breed of the "uomo terribile" of the Renaissance, to that group of men whose imagination, cast in heroic mold, has left a permanent stamp upon life and art.

Gautier has left us a brilliant portrait of the Hugo of this period:

"To Hugo the years that bend and weaken and wrinkle the genius of the masters seem but to bring fresh strength and energy and beauty. He ages like the lions. His brow, seamed with august furrows, rises under a mane larger, thicker, more bristling and more disheveled than ever before. His nails of bronze have sprouted. His yellow eyes are like suns within caverns; and when he roars the other animals are silent. Or, changing the comparison, one might liken him to an oak that dominates the forest; its enormous wrinkled trunk bursting into leaf, its branches mighty as trees. Its deep-reaching roots drink of the sap at the heart of the earth, its head almost touches heaven. In its vast foliage the stars shine at night, the birds sing at dawn. It braves the sun, the tempest, the wind, the thunder and the rain. The very scars of the thunderbolt have added to its beauty something formidable and superb."

III

Thus far an attempt has been made to obtain a somewhat general view of the "phenomenon of French literature." Let us now bring to bear some of the instruments of modern criticism, and even attempt the hazardous feat of subjecting the brain of the Titan to microscopic analysis.

M. Leopold Mabilleau has written an analytical study of Victor Hugo, which by reason of the originality of its point of view as well as by its critical acumen may be said to make waste paper of a considerable portion of the library of Hugo criticism. As the work is recent, untranslated, and unknown in this country it may be of interest to suggest some of its salient features.

Vision, in the opinion of this critic, is the capital trait of Victor Hugo. His creative imagination invariably chooses the visual form: "I saw a monster trumpet in the clouds"; "I saw pass before me

the Roman and the Florentine." Whenever he wishes to express a suddenly awakened thought, a recollection or an inspiration, its expression naturally takes the form of vision. The actual effort of meditation is "the calm and profound fixity of the eyes." With this trait in view it is interesting and significant to recall the fact that all the biographies testify to the excellence of the poet's eyesight. To the end of his life he was able to do without spectacles. His sense of vision was marvelous in its intensity. Was it something more?

The sense of color is one of the primary elements in vision. Let us examine it in the light of M. Mabilleau's investigations. According to Gautier, Victor Hugo was a colorist of the first rank and might have been a great painter, had he so desired. As it was, he had an extraordinary facility of expressing his conceptions of objects by impressionistic sketches. These sketches are the perfect analogue of his word pictures, and are of great value in forming an estimate of his psychological

processes. Not one of them shows the slightest trace of color. The effect is produced solely by means of light and shade. Chiar-oscuro is carried to its extreme limits. This fact has suggested to some critics the startling theory that Victor Hugo was lacking in the perception of color, and we are brought face to face with the paradox that the unrivaled "colorist" of the Romantic School was, in a sense, color-blind.

Let us try to form some idea of Victor Hugo's actual vision of the world. Outward objects seem to have imprest themselves upon his retina as upon a photographic plate, distinguished one from another by their inequality of light. For this marvelous vision light itself seems to have the power to create forms. It is as if the rays of an all-powerful eye had the marvelous faculty of realizing in space the interior vision which it projects.

The element that enters most strongly into Victor Hugo's vision of the outward world is light. Its contrasts and various degrees have been carefully noted. Three

quarters of the terms describing the visual appearance of objects relate to light. He has seventeen ways of expressing brightness, and the various shades of white are described by sixteen terms. The different shades of black are described by eighteen characterizations. The three colors that impress his imagination most strongly are blue, yellow, and red. Blue, which fairly obsesses him, is the azure tone of the heavens, the soft brightness of the sky filtered of its more violent rays. It is light in its purest and softest phase, and, as we know, it appealed to the poet with special power. Yellow and red are simply light in its most intense forms. Thus the three celestial colors vanish before analysis or, in other words, are found to be changing sensations made by light on the poet's vision.

It is very curious to observe the law of antithesis at work and dominant in the realm of color as conceived by the poet. Black becomes a positive color and gives rise to objects of such intense, distinct

character as to produce in us the actual illusion of darkness visible; thus he says: "blocks of obscurity," "flakes of night," "black stars," stagnations of shadow." Observe the strange conception found in one of his poems: "The lugubrious obscurity appeared in all its nakedness; one might say that it disrobed itself of the shadows that clothed it."

With advancing age, as the conceptions of the poet assume more absolute form, all the clear colors melt into white, all the somber shades into black, and we are confronted with the strange fact that his later word pictures are identical in character with his early drawings—that is to say, they absolutely exclude color. They are studies in black and white. Observe M. Mabilleau's curious analysis on this point:

"The simplification of visual data allows us to divine that Victor Hugo's mechanism of vision must have undergone important modifications in the nervous rhythm which constitutes the image: he *perceives* less colors, therefore he *sees* differently. At first as the result of continuous medita-

tion, of imaginative obsession, and of the weight of care the poet's vision has become *fixt*, a fact which suffices to give to his sensations a distinctness, a precision, a hardness, and which explains the character of the images executed: blows of light, shreds of sunlight, bars of fire, plates of light, star-splashes. Hence that impression of contrast, of relief, produced by the effort of the eye to isolate an object from its vicinage. The immediate consequence of this fixity is that the color thus 'sunk in' does not remain as a dull background in the picture: the tension of the apparatus of vision causes a group of luminous points to emerge, and each color quickly resolve itself into a brilliant swarming which constitutes a white light. At this point under the influence of persistent fixity a scintilation is perceived and the vanished colors reappear through the breaks of the prism. These issue forth in their geometrical alternations with lightning-like rapidity and vivacity, and are as different from the inert appearance of material things as a rainbow is different from a field of flowers.

"The man who sees thus necessarily relates every color he perceives to some element of the spectrum developed by the force of his vision, and derives his definitions and comparisons solely from the objects which naturally and continually gleam before our eyes—the stars and precious stones. Such was the case with Victor Hugo: for him the fine and

changing shades of morning insensibly assume the precision and rigidity of a mineral tone: what is the dawn? 'a cloud of sapphires, onyx and diamonds'; what are the heavens? 'a startling peacock's tail opening its eyes in the blue immensity'; what is the universe? 'a mass of brightness, a furnace of rays and rubies . . . an immense dragon constellated with jewels.' "

This tendency toward concreteness of expression is one of the most amazing phases of the poet's genius. It is the trait that seals his full brotherhood with Dante. It is the supreme achievement of creative imagination, whose function is to "body forth" the idea, as Shakespeare says, and make it real. Innumerable examples of this prevailing trait might be extracted from the later poems, wherein he becomes the realist of the Infinite ever striving to translate his visions into concrete forms.

This species of metaphor belongs to the poet's mature period and is found principally in the poems. There is no parallel for it in universal literature. It is an attempt to put boundless immensity in con-

tours, to embody as it were, the Infinite. Thus he calls Being "a sensitive and splendid tempest," and speaks of "the mighty whisper of the Unknown in the darkness." Darkness "has a mocking face and a grave profile." He sees "waves of night and waves of dawn." The impalpable and indeterminate take concrete form. What is the azure sky? A "species of crystal waves of the Infinite." The sunset? "Mountains of purple and porticoes of gold." Henceforth he thinks objects. The towering fantasies which obsess his imagination are satisfied with nothing less than objective expression. It is the last phase, the grandiose strophe of some literary Gargantua piling Pelion on Ossa, attempting to girdle the universe with a trope, as thus: "What is Creation? A vast, strange, fire-vomiting monster of beauty, rearing its hundred heads out of the Unknown, having seas for scales and suns for eyes."

But the most amazing phase of his genius remains to be considered, a phase which eludes all the processes of critical

analysis and is as difficult of explanation as genius itself. This may be indicated as his sense of mystery, his extraordinary power of indicating by words things and ideas which by their very nature elude the contours of expression. He has succeeded in arriving at a sort of intuition of that indeterminate part of being which lies beyond the region of human experience: eternity, the Infinite, night, death, darkness and nothingness, the inaccessible and the inexpressible. And while he is not the first whose imagination has been haunted by such conceptions, he is the only writer who has found the secret of imparting his vision to others; for he possesses a sort of verbal magic which enables him to conjure in the mind of the reader a sudden apparition of the world "beyond the region of our souls." This species of word-wizardry, this literary black-magic, unique in poetry, is found in the strange poems, "The Trumpet of the Last Judgment," and "The Parricide." It exhibits the final phase of that formidable imagination for which even the modern con-

ception of the Cosmos does not suffice, but which seeks its material in a world of its own creation.

He now becomes the somber lyrist of the darkness expressing in hitherto unheard-of strains the sense of mystery, vague half-visions that appear for a moment in the penumbra of imagination, mystic forms that issue from the shadow, the marvels of the darkness, the chimeras of the unknown. This power of expressing the inexpressible, this word-sorcery which is able to present vagueness and mystery in contours, as it were, is certainly the most amazing phase of his genius. No poet, ancient or modern, has ever approached him in this respect; neither Dante whom he resembles in the concreteness and precision of his images, nor Milton whom he equals in sublimity, nor Æschylus whom he rivals by his grandiose conceptions.

These qualities are exhibited in part in the astonishing poem "The Titan," wherein he describes the land which is "the end of being and of hope, the sinister

inhospitality of night's deeps, the cloaca wherein future Sodoms shall crumble, the tenebrous deeps whereof silence guards the secret. The abject, the cold, the horrible, the miserable and terrible evanishing of things, that species of tempest which sweeps Lethe, that thing without name—the abortion of a Universe." The Infinite becomes a "horrible and recoiling porch"; darkness is a "hydra" of which the nights are the "pale vertebræ"; horror is a "pale nymph wringing her hands"; Satan, or Evil, is a "monster hesitating in the gloom."

This species of literary hallucination having its ordered laws and nexus is unique in literature. For anything remotely resembling it one must turn to the pages of Swedenborg or Dante. It is the characteristic which in certain scientific quarters has brought upon Hugo the suspicion of insanity, that malady which from the days of Lucretius has been associated with certain aspects of genius. It has convinced Lombroso and Max Nordau that the great French

poet was not free from the taint of mental degeneracy. Flaubert, however, who understood Victor Hugo, disposed of this theory effectually in the following words which he wrote to Taine: "The interior vision of the artist can not be likened to that of one who is really the victim of hallucinations. . . . I know both states perfectly well: an abyss yawns between them. In hallucination properly so called there is always terror; you fear that your personality is escaping you; you think that you are going to die In poetic vision, on the contrary, there is a feeling of happiness, of something entering into you."

Victor Hugo, himself, understood the perils of these adventures of the imagination, and frequently alludes to the subject in the present volume. It is apparent that he considered himself immune. But he warns others of the danger. Beneath the powerful fantasy of his genius there was a basis of rock-ribbed sanity that nothing could undermine and that persisted to the end of life. He reminds us of that Titan figure of Rodin's, the

"Thinker," who leans over the abysses without plunging headlong.

Let us explore still further this prodigious imagination, whose functions have become wholly cerebral, and which seems to have the power of creating out of the void. With advancing age the interest of the poet is detached, as it were, from the external world, and his vision becomes fixt upon an inner and spiritual world which he creates out of the fabric of pure imagination. This world resembles, in a sense, the imaginary world of Dante; resembles it as the world of Ptolemy resembles that of Copernicus, for six centuries lie between the "Divine Comedy" and "Les Contemplations." The wonders and mysteries of the visible universe at last begin to pall: he searches for the last word of the enigma in the depths of his own consciousness. Here we are brought face to face with his genius in the nude. The relative has lost its charm; his intellect now craves the absolute. Henceforth his expression loses its precise and clear-cut aspect and becomes a species of sym-

bolism freighted with mystery. The voyager of the Ideal, the lyrist of the constellations now launches into the world of darkness. He beholds "the black yawn of eternity." He sees the dim forms of the Eumenides "indistinct in the gloom," "Plutonian chimeras big with mythology," apocalyptic monsters, the frightful brood of the womb of darkness. The sinister side of creation reveals itself and fascinates him; the formidable problem of evil begins to take possession of his imagination. This phase of his genius in eclipse is one of the most fascinating traits of the later period. It reveals the fact that even the sublime world-conception of science has not been sufficient for his formidable imagination. The stellar universe powdered with mighty suns, that overwhelming immensity, at the thought of which the brain reels and the proudest intellects are struck with humility, could not satisfy Hugo. His thought ranged beyond the confines of all these actual wonders, beyond the frontiers of the real, and searched the realm of the possi-

ble. Beyond the farthest nebulæ, in uttermost depths of infinite space, he discovered another universe, the universe where Evil holds eternal sway and which consists of the worlds that languish under the blight of Omnipotence. And as the imagination of the waking dreamer sculptures his vision in the clouds, the imagination of Victor Hugo bodies forth objects in this world of night: for to him darkness is not a mere negation, but real and palpable like the world of light. Somber sculptor of the shadows, he blocks out terrible forms in the black marble of the unknown. Like Dante he has created an Inferno peopled with the reprobate of history. This hell of Victor Hugo is not less objective than that of the Divine Comedy; nor less terrible, since the spirit of Justice is as potent in the nineteenth century as in the thirteenth. Science has infinitely enlarged its boundaries, but has not quenched its eternal blazon. Its circles are the rings of Saturn and its spirals are lost in infinite space.

For it is the sublime conception of the

Cosmos, as revealed by modern science, which has inspired the poet's highest flights. Those critics who have sought to depreciate Victor Hugo by charging him with being deficient in scientific knowledge are singularly blind. Doubtless he may not lay claim to technical mastery in this field, but it must be apparent to all that his mind is dominated by modern ideas. And it is not unlikely when his work is viewed from a greater distance of time this quality which has not yet received its true appraisal will stand out as the the salient trait of his genius.

The Hermes of the word and the Magian of nature, he has explored the dark and terrible side of the universe and has beheld the apparitions of lightning and the dream. He has seen the dead and fetid stagnation of waters, "vague tumors of the cloaca of worlds." He knows two species of night: the living night which engenders the monstrous, and the dead night—that is to say, nothingness. The monstrous side of creation fascinates him and engenders in his imagination an un-

heard-of world of nightmare. Taine said of Balzac that his literary magic could make the sordid romantic; but Hugo has eclipsed this feat—he has made the horrible fascinating: the ugly and the sinister leave his hands endowed with a species of terrible charm.

However faithful the attempt to confine such genius within the bounds of the category, certain traits elude definition. His prodigious imagination has produced a brood of metaphors that are not to be included within the domain of the rhetoricians. Of this nature is the audacious hypallage by which he likens the spur on the heel of Napoleon to the star that leads his legions on to triumph. Of equal interest is the species of sorcery that he performs by mere verbal juxtaposition. With him there is such a thing as the chemistry of words: "Nomen, Numen, Lumen," "Nix et Nox," "Vis et Vir."

Further, there is a sort of Titan metaphor, essentially Hugoesque, and belonging to that trait of sublimity which is characteristic of his genius. The round

silver disc of the moon, with the cathedral-like forest for a setting, suggests a grandiose image: the eternal Mass offered by the Omnipotent—the Elevation of the Host. The seven stars of the Septentrion are the signature of Jehovah in the firmament. Comets are the "white tears" of the pall of night.

To supplement this hydra-metaphor he has invented an imaginative symbolism—a sort of hieroglyphic poetry—which enables him to clothe his thoughts in hitherto unheard-of forms. The wing, the natural symbol of the bird and of flight, becomes the emblem of liberty, nobility, the spiritual. Its antithesis is the claw, which connotes the ignoble and the bestial: "The wings of the dawn and the claws of the night." In accordance with a law everywhere dominant in the poet's world-conception everything in nature has a moral value. The Eagle is the symbol of what is noble and lofty. Implacable, proud, and terrible, its empyrean flights suggest the highest attainable conception of splendid achievement. It

is the symbol of triumph and of empire. In contrast with the Eagle is the Dove, a symbol of the opposite qualities of gentleness and tenderness. A third symbol is the Owl, a type of unmerited suffering, and of the Saviour Himself. The Lion represents the highest type of power and nobility of which nature is capable. His lordly mien comports with the poet's own nature. This is the favorite type. In direct antithesis is the Ass, which, with its bowed head and lowly mien, represents the humble and the ignorant of earth. The third member of the trinity is the Toad, "the poor being whose only crime is ugliness." Lastly there is the trinity of evil—the Serpent, the Worm, and the Hydra—symbols of destruction, of desolation, of deception.

This symbolic hierarchy plays an important rôle in his poetry. It imparts to it its living character and endows it with that eternal freshness that we find in the primitive strophe of Homer and in certain of the Bible poems.

IV

Let us now study the personal side of this extraordinary man whose genius revolutionized French literature. And first of all let us glance at the portrait which Jules Claretie made of Hugo in 1870:

"The shoulders are broad, the muscles solid, the head powerful. His complexion, once pale, has assumed a reddish tint. The wind of the ocean has colored his cheeks, which are framed in a fine beard, literally silvered. His hair, white and stiff, rises boldly over a forehead shining and bulging—that vast forehead that has remained legendary; under it open blue eyes, now irritated or flaming, now sparkling with wit or illumined with kindness, by turns contemplative and mocking. His voice, a finely pitched guttural, is somewhat sharp; his gestures are exceedingly elegant, denoting the politeness of another age, when we were still unafflicted with Anglomania and the Britannic handshake. His affability is quite noticeable and peculiar to himself; furthermore, in spite of all his glory he is distinguished by a natural timidity of long standing and emanating from a just pride."

The fact is that in spite of his immense celebrity and the literal idolatry in which he was held by his own generation, his actual personality was never completely unveiled. Ever dreaming of boundless fame and covetous of the good opinion of men, he nevertheless was extremely jealous of his own privacy, and neither Gautier nor any of the *Cénacle* was ever permitted to cross the frontiers of conventional friendship in his presence. It is remarkable that in the case of Victor Hugo there is a notable lack of that interesting gossip which ordinarily attaches itself to the names of famous men, serving often as a sort of flashlight upon unknown sides of their character. Victor Hugo enters history by his books alone, as an eminent critic has observed; and of this fact he himself seemed to have had the obscure consciousness. We find his conduct and outward actions regulated by a severe dignity of demeanor that presents a striking contrast to the swaggering attitude of the species of literary *condottieri* who were his devoted followers. This attitude he

preserved until the end of his life, so that we are perfectly safe in regarding as spurious most of the mass of anecdotes and gossip that has grown round his name.

Does the well-known biography "*Victor Hugo Raconté*" depart from this rule? Those who have read this interesting record, written presumably by Mme. Victor Hugo, will recall that it is singularly scant of the kind of matter under discussion. There is, however, an exception to be made, and it is a very notable one. During the exile at Guernsey Victor Hugo was visited by M. Paul Stapfer, a French professor of reputation, who, in a volume recently published in Paris, has recorded his impressions and recollections of the famous writer. M. Stapfer, in fact, became a kind of Boswell, taking copious notes of his conversations with Hugo upon all sorts of subjects—philosophy, literature, politics, theology. The confidences made to this singularly favored visitor were of so personal and intimate a nature and embraced so free a

discussion of contemporaries that it was considered not advisable to publish them until a generation after they were written. In these conversations, held in the interior solitude of the English island or uttered on the seashore to the accompaniment of the breakers' incessant thunder, we come in intimate contact with the real Victor Hugo. We hear from his own lips some of the secrets of his soul. We are taken behind the scenes of his mighty drama, "Les Miserables." He confides to us the amazing intelligence that Marius is himself, "created in his own image and likeness," that in the acts and career of Cosette's lover may be found the whole history of his own youth, "even to the very list of his dinners." That unmatched idyll of the lovers of the *rue Plumet* is therefore painted from the life.

We now pass to the subject of literature itself. Who were Victor Hugo's favorite authors? He names them specifically: Homer, Dante, Shakespeare—the trinity of the literary empyrean. For the "Divine Comedy" he exprest bound-

less admiration, and it is interesting to note that he referred to "Purgatory" and "Paradise" as two badly understood poems which are at least equal to the "Inferno." Of clearer vision than Voltaire, he discerned the literary supremacy of Shakespeare and condemned the current opinion of the great poet brought into fashion by Taine, who saw in the plays a mere reproduction of men and nature. He insisted that to the human element Shakespeare added the superhuman element, and by reason of that was great. "Every great poet," declared he, unconsciously describing himself, "is a creator of types, and it is of the very essence of types that they be above nature and superhuman."

What was his attitude toward famous contemporaries? He has defined it in very plain terms. It is well known that Taine was not one of his admirers and he has returned the great determinist's animadversions upon himself with interest, pronouncing him a *cuistre* and expressing profound contempt for his historical theo-

ries. Alfred de Musset, whom Taine places above Tennyson, is a "charming, slight and delicate poet belonging to the family of Horace and La Fontaine." Of Lamartine, who since has fallen below Musset in popular estimation, he had a high opinion. Chateaubriand is "full of significant things." In the "Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe" he has displayed immense talent, but he is the personification of dislike for mankind—an odious personality.

His opinion of the eighteenth century is what we should expect from the prince of Romantics. With the exception of Voltaire, Diderot, and Beaumarchais its prose is "feeble, common, and vulgar." Montesquieu is included in this sweeping estimate. For the style of the seventeenth century he profest great admiration.

It is now time to quote an amazing statement made by Victor Hugo to his Boswell in an unguarded moment. It has been preserved for us exactly as it was uttered.

"There is only one classic—do you understand me well?—only one. I mean *myself*. I am the man of our time who know French best. After me come Sainte-Beuve and Mérimée. Mérimée, however, is a writer of short breath, a consumptive, one of those for whom the adjective 'sober' was invented. A fine eulogium in truth to pronounce upon an author. Sobriety may mean a bad stomach. Continence is not a very great virtue when one is continent like Origen. Was not Barthelmy-Sainte-Hilaire advised to observe the sobriety of Homer? *Grand Dieu!* to think that this father of poetry had fallen into the hands of such imbeciles! Whatever hopelessly stupid literary criticism it has been possible to perpetrate, has been applied to Homer. Did not a person named Valles write the phrase relative to the 'Toilers of the Sea?' 'Who was Homer? a stereotyper.' Let M. Victor Hugo be careful. If he keeps on, his work will sink to the level of the 'Iliad' and 'O'dyssey'! . . . Thirty-five members of the French Academy are ignorant of French, and among the number our friend M. Guizot—a dreamy writer, a melancholy writer, a Protestant writer, but a great orator, the most powerful orator of the century. Cousin is an infamous beggar, and, whatever they may say, he is destitute of real literary talent. Edouard Bertin demanded of me one day what I thought of him. 'I despise him thoroughly,' replied I. 'You are

right,' returned Bertin, 'he has the soul of a lackey.' Nisard has changed his skin several times.''

Victor Hugo's scholarship has been a favorite point of attack for adverse critics. It has been asserted that his learning was superficial and that the prodigious array of names found in his work conveys a false idea of his intellectual equipment. This contention must fall before the testimony of M. Stapfer. He assures us that Hugo was a profound and brilliant Latin scholar and could recite by heart whole pages from the following authors: Vergil, Horace, Tacitus, Juvenal, Lucretius, Justinius, Quintus, Curtius, and Sallust. His knowledge of the Greek classics was confined to Æschylus and Homer, whom he read in Latin translations. Like Cato, he began the study of Greek in old age.

Among philosophers he cherished particular admiration for Spinoza, in whose prodigious metaphysical dreams he probably saw reflections of his own. The sublime conception of pantheism which sprang from the brain of the ''God-intoxicated man'' made a profound appeal to

Hugo's grandiose imagination. It is altogether likely, too, that the profoundly religious idea that underlies Spinoza's system left a deep and permanent impression.

Regarding the definitive phase of his religious ideas, about which there has been so much discussion, the work to which we have referred gives some curiously interesting information. In the conversations at Guernsey, the religious side of Victor Hugo emerges in a strong light. They prove that he was a firm believer in God and in the efficacy of prayer. No Breton Abbé was more fiercely inimical to the infidelity and materialism that were beginning to widen their empire in France. Upon the problem of evil, that eternal riddle of theology, he exprest his views freely. They are remarkable for the fact that they contain absolute proof that the Manicheism so often met with in his writings was something more than mere poetic imagination. He was asked how he was able to reconcile certain revolting catastrophes with the

providence and justice of God. He replied as follows:

"The objection is a serious one. Evil is evil. No sophistry, no alchemy can change it into good. To make God responsible, as Christians do to-day for all evil which is undisguisedly evil, and even to thank Him for them as for uncomprehended benefits, is something that is unacceptable to the heart as well as to the conscience. *That is why I am not one of those who treat Manicheism with disdain.* To me belief in two hostile powers struggling with each other does not seem contrary either to philosophic reason or to true religion. But this struggle ought to have an end, and it must be a victory for God. Evil is only relative; good is absolute. Evil must disappear, must be absorbed by *good.* Hell exists, and the earth constitutes part of it; it is the *inferior* world, the transitory and provisional sojourn called by the ancients *Inferi.* Yes, we inhabit the lowest part of creation, that in which Evil reigns and men suffer; and still worse, where the innocent beasts suffer, the poor horses for example, whose humble agonies I have depicted in 'Melancholia.' "

The question now naturally suggests itself, What is Victor Hugo's place in literature? Incontestably he is the most popular of learned writers. His works,

translated into every civilized language, still delight hosts of readers. His romances are popular alike with the learned and the uncultivated. It is a different matter with his poetry, which is not susceptible of adequate translation. Nevertheless it is in his poetry that his genius has achieved its highest triumphs, that his originality has reached supreme expression. Edward Dowden is inclined to regard him as the greatest lyric poet of all time. François Coppée asserts that of all the poets that humanity has produced he is the one who has invented the most striking and magnificent images. Jules Lemaître, who disliked him, pronounced him "the mightiest gatherer of words since the world began." Balzac calls him "a whole universe." Renan denominates him "our great master." Turgenieff pronounces him "the chief of European contemporary literature." Swinburne declares that future generations will identify our epoch with the name of Victor Hugo.

For eighty years his name shone like a

beacon light in European literature. Its splendor has quenched many aspiring lights. Against its crystal the bats and moths of learning of all lands have beaten in vain. At times an eagle like Swinburne mistakes it for the sun and soars into its flames. Distant countries have seen the reflection of its far-flung rays, and to-day its light and heat are felt in many literatures. It is over twenty years since the dust of Victor Hugo was laid in the Pantheon. Since the triumphs of Romanticism two generations of writers have arisen, new literary ideals have taken the place of those founded by the man of 1830. The triumphs of modern science have remolded French literature, and the great traditions of the past have been continued by men of the type of Renan and Taine. New stars have appeared in the firmament and many lights of the first magnitude have paled to the sixth, or vanished. But the star of Victor Hugo has seen the rise and fall of many asteroids and has grown brighter with the years. Even the thick-sown sky of con-

temporary Parisian literature has not paled its fires. And now, over one hundred years after his birth, the conviction seems gradually to be gaining ground that Victor Hugo is to be regarded, not merely as the greatest figure in contemporary literature, the bright, particular star of a single group in the literary empyrean, but that he is to be ranked in that supreme constellation of Orion, whose four central orbs are Homer, Æschylus, Dante, and Shakespeare.

LORENZO O'ROURKE.

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VICTOR HUGO'S
INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Genius and Taste

We certainly have no intention of denying or girding at comparative taste, which plays a useful rôle in rhetoric and prosody; but, without wishing to deprive M. Quicherat of his bread, we may be permitted to turn our thoughts to Æschylus and Isaiah. Let us, then, be permitted to say that there is a superior and absolute taste which is not reducible to formula and which is at once the latent and the patent law of art. This true and unique taste is little known to those whose profession it is to teach it.

This taste is the great arcanum. It is this superior taste which, to the inexpressible wonder of Vitruvius, augments and diminishes, according to some unknown, mysterious progression, the diameter of the columns and the spaces between the columns in the colonnade of the Parthe-

non: a grave fault elsewhere, a beauty here. It is this superior taste, which, with but slight regard for "sobriety," devotes six, eight, ten verses to the minute description of a wound. It is this taste, quite shameless, which makes Juvenal display Messalina wholly nude. This it is which, feeling that the nave is about to crumble away and making a virtue of necessity, snatches beauty from infirmity and adds to the cathedrals those sublime flying-buttresses which seem like oblique arches of a bridge from earth to heaven. It teaches Rubens to add, contrary to all vraisemblance, let us admit, to the debarkation of Marie de Médicis at Marseilles, the Tritons blowing shell-trumpets and the dripping naïads that moisten the picture. In "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes" in the Vatican, it places Jesus in the background, while in the foreground are geese showing their backs signed Raphael. It is what in the center of Jordaën's "Springtime" in which there appears below an Eve who is also a Hebe, seats a satyr on the earth, infuses strange

power into his savage glance, and reveals by the lightning of the fawn's eye the ineffable mystery that resides in the flesh. In the magnificent ceiling of Julio Romano, "The Descent of the Horses of the Sun," it reveals Apollo below, thus showing the humanity of the god. Having to represent Noah in bas-relief, it boldly carves the Biblical detail in the great doorway of Bourges. It draws the contours of certain of Michelangelo's torsos in impossible lines, arriving at sublimity through torment. It makes Priapus do at the Esquiliæ what Horace narrates; it makes Ezekiel eat what the Scriptures recount.

The pun when it is of Æschylus, the grimace when it is Goya's, the hump when Æsop wears it, the louse when Murillo cracks it, the flea when it bites Voltaire, the ass's jawbone when Samson wields it, hysteria when paraded empurpled in the Song of Songs, Goton at the lavatory when it pleases Rembrandt to call it Suzanna at the Bath, the bulging eye when it is that of Œdipus, the plucked-out eye

when it is Gloucester's, the shrieking woman when it is Hecuba, snoring when it comes from the Eumenides, a blow when the Cid's vengeance, spittle when Jesus receives it, coarseness when Homer uses it, savagery when it is that of Shakespeare, slang when Villon utters it, rags when worn by Irus, blows of a stick when Scapin gives them, carrion when the vulture of Salvator Rosa gnaws it, the belly when Agrippina uncovers it, the lupanar when Régnier is our guide, the meddling woman when Plautus makes use of her, the squirt when it pursues Porceaugnac, the cesspool when Tacitus drowns Nero in it and when Rabelais uses it to smear theocracy—all these are part of this supreme taste. The hag of Molière, the prostitute of Beaumarchais, and the bawd of Shakespeare belong to it.

Certain familiarities, intimacies of speech, insolences, if you will, which can emanate only from greatness, are found in sovereign works alone and are their seal. The eagle's dung reveals the topmost summits.

Rhetoricians habitually are ignorant of the value of the words they pronounce. *Attic salt. Classic taste.* Look for attic salt in Aristophanes; look for classic taste in Homer. Homer does not keep us waiting; from the first canto of the Iliad coarse words rain. *The eye of a dog! The heart of a stag!* Achilles is speaking to Agamemnon. As for Aristophanes merely open *Lysistrata.* Is Aristophanes then wanting in taste? Is Homer wanting in taste? On the contrary taste is found throughout, but it is taste on the grand scale, incorruptible taste, the manifestation of the beautiful. It is in what shocks, it is in what irritates, and is invulnerable even in the mêlée of filthy and obscure words, like the god that it is. Read Plautus. Read Horace. Accordingly as beauty, that light, is absent or present, the same words make Vadé ignoble and Aristophanes splendid.

Meanwhile, let us prove it, or, if you will, let us acknowledge it—in presence of this grand taste, readily admitted by the reader, the spectator and auditor involun-

tarily recoil. The "academic," the parliamentary, is what pleases men assembled within walls. Demosthenes and Aristophanes were often hooted; a "war on words" was waged upon them. During their lifetime Shakespeare, Molière and Beaumarchais were hissed on account of their figures and their wit. "Bad taste!" it was called. This is the law of all auditories, senates, or theaters. There is one thing that seems interdicted to assembled men: it is imagination—immense, solitary gift.

Certain critics—are they critics?—take the senses they lack for perfections no one else can possess. When Stendhal (the same who preferred the memoirs of Maréchal Gouvion-Saint-Cyr to Homer, and who read a page of the Code every morning to learn the secrets of style),—when Stendhal takes Chateaubriand to task for this beautiful expression so precise in its vagueness: "The undetermined summit of the forest," honest Stendhal has no idea that he is lacking in appreciation of nature, and resembles that

deaf man who cried out while Malibran was singing: "What is the meaning of those grimaces?"

This superior taste that we have just been characterizing rather than defining, is the appanage of genius and is inaccessible to all else, a peak that embraces all and remains virgin—the Jungfrau.

There is the lower taste and the higher taste. Taste acording to the Abbé Bernis and taste according to Pindar. The amazing thing is that from rhetorician to rhetorician taste according to Bernis has been qualified as *good taste,* and taste according to Pindar as *bad taste.*

This grand taste, the higher taste, is nothing less than the acceptance of each material or moral phenomenon considered by itself, with the right of adding to it that which is part of the sovereignty of the intellect; it is a certain mingling of the immeasurable and the proportional which holds true even in the most prodigiously magnified conceptions; it is the

austere love of truth which conserves to the infusoria their minuteness and to the condor its vast breadth of wing; it is the absolute which exacts of everything its reality before introducing it into the ideal, all fecundation being at this price.

All that we have just enumerated (and many more details that we can not recall) offend you in the great works of the human mind. Very well, try to cut away what shocks you, and you shall see. A gap will appear. When you think you have removed a defect there will appear a hiatus—that is to say, a real defect. You shall have changed the Achilles of Homer for the Achilles of Racine. Mystery, therefore, is this taste refractory both to rule and method, and you should respect it. No definition whatever is possible. Having all power, it has all rights.

It is this taste which, having made the gods, and feeling that the infinite is not yet satisfied, makes monsters. It is this sovereign taste, omnipotent like genius itself, of which it is the sense, that divides the East into two parts, giving to the

Caucasian half as its point of departure the Ideal, and to the Tibetan half as its point of departure the Chimerical. Hence two mighty poetries. Here Apollo, there the Dragon. The group of Pythion, that symbol of the very creation, projects over the human mind two shadows, each in the image of one of these two figures, and, of this double shadow which is forked, are born into art two worlds. These two worlds belong to the supreme taste and mark its two poles. At one of the extremities of this taste is Greece, at the other China.

Having brought before the mind this vast unity in variety of art, let us take into account the mingling of temperament with genius, of ages and climates, and while contemplating great works let us pause in reflection, lest in our blindness we see a defect in what is often an unexpected mark of power. I acknowledge that a certain kind of beauty throws a shadow and startles; but is not the cloud sometimes beautiful? In studying a genius, the thinker is no more disturbed

by the appearance of a strange detail than he would be by a streak of smoke floating across the heavens.

When, then, will it be understood that poets are entities, that their faculties, combined according to a logarithm special to each mind, are concordant, that at the heart of all these beings one feels the same being, the unknown, that in these men there is something elemental, that what they do they must needs do, *well roared lion!* that these things are necessary and climacteric, that it blows, rains, and thunders in their works as in nature, and that at certain moments earth trembles at their genius?

Certain works are what one might call excess of the beautiful. They do more than flash lightning; they thunder. Granting the indolence and baseness of the human mind, this thunder is good.

In this sense the literature of antiqui-

ty protests against "classic literature," and in the practise of great and free art the ancients are in accord with the moderns.

One day Béranger, that Frenchman with a dash of the Gaul, ignorant of both Latin and Greek, most literary of the unlettered, saw a Homer on Jouffroy's table. It was at the height of the movement of 1830, a movement complicated by resistance. Béranger, encountering Homer, was curious. A ballad-singer who sees a colossus pass by is not ashamed to tap him on the shoulder. "Read me a little of that," said Béranger to Jouffroy. Jouffroy relates that he thereupon opened the Iliad at random and began to read aloud, translating literally the Greek into French. Béranger listened. All at once he interrupted Jouffroy and cried out: "Surely, that is not there?" "An actual fact," replied Jouffroy. "I am translating literally." Jouffroy had chanced precisely upon those insults hurled by Achilles at Agamemnon, which we alluded to a moment ago. When the

passage was finished, Béranger, with his smile of mingled raillery and seriousness, said: "Homer is a romantic!"

Béranger thought that he had uttered a jest—a jest at the expense of the whole world, and particularly of Homer. He had stated a truth. For *Romantic* translate *Primitive.*

What Béranger said of Homer we may say of Ezekiel, we may say it of Plautus, we may say it of Tertullian, we may say it of the *Romancero,* we may say it of the *Niebelungen.*

Let us add this: A primitive genius does not necessarily belong to what we wrongly call *primitive times.* It is a genius which, whatever the age and whatever the civilization to which it belongs, springs directly from nature and humanity. Whoever drinks at the grand source is primitive; whoever enables you to drink from thence is primitive; whoever has a soul and gives it is primitive. Beaumarchais is as primitive as Aristophanes. Diderot is as primitive as Hesiod. Figaro and the Neveu de Rameau issue directly,

without transition, from the great heart of humanity. There is here no question of reflection; these are immediate creations; it is life caught from the living.

That aspect of nature that is called society inspires quite as many primitive creations as that other aspect of nature called barbarism. Don Quixote is as primitive as Ajax. One defies gods, the other windmills; both are men. Nature, humanity—these are the living waters. The epoch amounts to nothing. One may be a primitive genius at a secondary epoch such as the sixteenth century, witness Rabelais; and at a tertiary epoch like the seventeenth, witness Molière.

Primitive has the same range as *original,* with a shade the more. The primitive poet, in intimate communication with man and nature, derives from no one. What is the use of copying books? What is the use of copying poets? What is the use of copying ready-made things, when one is rich with the enormous wealth of the possible, when all the imaginable is delivered up to you, when one has before

him and in his possession all the somber chaos of the typical, and when one feels within his breast the voice that utters "*Fiat lux!*"

The primitive poet has predecessors, but no guides. Do not allow yourself to yield to optical illusions. Vergil is not Dante's guide; it is Dante who drags along Vergil, and whither does he lead him? To Satan. Vergil is hardly capable of going alone to the realm of Pluto.

The original poet is distinct from the primitive poet in that he may have guides and models. The original poet sometimes imitates; the primitive poet never. La Fontaine is original, Cervantes is primitive. For originality certain qualities of style suffice; it is the maternal idea which makes a writer primitive. Hamilton is original, Apuleius is primitive. All primitive minds are original; original minds are not all primitive. According to the occasion, the same poet may be now original, now primitive. Molière, primitive in the *Misanthrope,* is merely original in *Amphitryon.*

Originality, further, is endowed with full rights; even the right to a certain meanness, even the right to a certain falseness. Marivaux exists. It is only a question of understanding, and we do not exclude anything with a possible claim. Drapery is part of taste· so are rags.

That lowest taste, rags—can it nave a place in art? No, in the vaudevilles of Scribe. Yes, in the figurines of Clodion. Where language is lacking, as Boileau rightly says, all is lacking. Now the language of art, which Scribe ignores, Clodion knows. The bonnet of Mimi Rosette may possess style. When Cousteau crumples a fishing-net upon the head of a sphinx who is a marquise, this taffeta of marble becomes part of the chimera and is equal to the thousand-pleated tunic of Cytherea Anadyomene. In truth there are no rules. Nothing being given, knead with it art, and you have an ode of Horace or Anacreon.

A manner of writing which is one's sole possession, a certain masterly character

imprest upon the whole style, an individual manner of touching and manipulating an idea—no more than this is needed to make sovereign artists; witness Horace.

Nevertheless, let us insist the poet who sees in art more than art, the poet who in poetry sees man, the poet who civilizes in good earnest, the poet who is master because he is servant, is the one that we acclaim. In all things we prefer him who can cry: "I have willed!"

This certainly may be called, without fear of error, the virtual and intrinsic omnipotence of beauty, even indifferent beauty.

If such trivial details were worth while noting, perhaps this would be the place to recall, in passing, the aberrations and sickly puerilities of a contemporaneous school of criticism, extinct to-day, and of which there remains but a single representative, the characteristic of falsehood being that it can not recruit its ranks. In this school, which flourished for a brief hour, it was the fashion to attack what,

in its queer argot, it called "form." Form, *forma,* beauty. What a strange watchword! Later on greatness was attacked. "To be great" became a defect! When beauty is held to be error, it is the sign of a bourgeois period; when greatness is a crime, it is a sign of the reign of the little.

The logomachy was curious. This school had issued this decree: "Style excludes thought. The image kills the idea. Beauty is sterile. It lacks the organ of conception and fecundation. Venus can not produce children."

Now, it is the contrary that is the truth. Beauty, being harmony, is by that very fact fecundity. Form and substance are as indivisible as flesh and blood. The blood is the flesh in flow; form is the fluid substance entering into all the words and empurpling them. No substance, no form. Form is the resultant. If there is no substance, of what is form the form?

It will be objected that we said a moment ago: "*Nothing* being given, etc."; but there *nothing* had a relative meaning,

and a trifle of Horace is sometimes the very substance of human life.

Beauty is the flowering of truth (the *splendor,* Plato says). Dig into etymology, reach to the root of vocables, *image* and *idea* are the same word. What you call form and what you call substance are absolutely identical, one being the exterior of the other, form being substance rendered visible.

If this school of the past was right, if the image excluded the idea, Homer, Æschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, who spoke by images alone, would be empty. The Bible, which, as Bossuet attests, is wholly made up of figures, would be hollow. These masterpieces of the human mind would be mere "form." Of thought they would contain nothing. Such is the result of a false point of departure.

From law to law, from deduction to deduction, we arrive at this: carte blanche, free elbow room, cables cut, gates swung wide open—go forth. What is the Ocean? It is permission.

Formidable permission, no doubt. Per-

mission to drown oneself, but permission to discover a world.

No point of the compass, no power, no sovereignty, no latitude, no adventure, no success is refused to genius. The sea gives free invitation to the swimmer, to the oar, to the sail, to the wind, to the paddle, to the helix. The atmosphere gives free invitation to wings, to airships, to condors, to the hippogriffs. Genius is the omnifaculty.

In poetry it proceeds by a prodigious continuation of Iliads, without our being able to imagine where this series of Homers, of which Rabelais and Shakespeare are a part, will end. In architecture it sometimes pleases it to glorify the cabin, and it makes the temple; it sometimes pleases it to humanize the mountain, and if it wishes it simple it makes the pyramid, while if it wishes it adorned it makes the cathedral; it is equally opulent with the right line as with the thousand broken angles of the forest, equally master of symmetry to which it adds immensity as of chaos, upon which it imposes equilibrium.

As regards mystery, it disposes of it. At a certain sacred time of the year, prolong the line of Cheops toward the zenith and you will arrive, astonished, at the star of the dragon; look upon the spires of Chartres, Anvers, and Strasburg, the doorways of Amiens and Rheims, and you will sense the abyss. The initiate and the strong alone know the algebra that lurks in music; genius knows all, and what it does not know it divines, and what it does not divine it invents, and what it does not invent it creates; and it invents the true and creates the lifelike. It possesses at heart the mathematics of art; it is at ease among the confusion of stars and heavens. Number has nothing to teach it; it extracts from it with the same facility the binomial for calculus and rhythm for imagination. It has its box of tools, employing iron where others have only lead, and steel where others have only iron, and the diamond where others have only steel, and the star where others have only the diamond; it has the grand method of correction, the grand regularity, the grand syn-

tax, the grand method, and the use of all these is its own secret. And it mingles with all this wisdom one knows not what divine madness—and this is genius.

It is a profound fact that criticism is forbidden to the mediocre. The great critic is a great philosopher. The enthusiasms of high art are possible to superior intelligences alone; to know how to admire is power of a high order.

Whoever has a fruitful interest in literary questions, so inexhaustible since they come in contact with the logos itself, whoever sounds the metaphysics of art, whoever lives in familiarity with the phenomena of the mind, invincibly is brought face to face with this amazing question which opens the most profound arcana of poetry:

Why are not the "perfect" the great? Why is Vergil inferior to Homer? Why is Anacreon inferior to Pindar? Why is Menander inferior to Aristophanes? Why is Sophocles inferior to Æschylus? Why is Lysippus inferior to Phidias? Why is David inferior to Isaiah? Why is Thu-

cydides inferior to Herodotus? Why is Cicero inferior to Demosthenes? Why is Titus Livius inferior to Tacitus? Why is Terence inferior to Plautus? Why is Petrarch inferior to Dante? Why is Vignole inferior to Piranese? Why is Van Dyck inferior to Rembrandt? Why is Boileau inferior to Régnier? Why is Racine inferior to Corneille? Why is Raphael inferior to Michelangelo?

This, we repeat, is a profound problem.

Why is that whole side of the nineteenth century admired by rhetoricians nothing as compared to Molière? Why is it that the whole English purist school, Pope, Dryden, Addison, etc., so incensed against Shakespeare, has the effect of a swarm of vermin in the lion's mane?

Why?

It is because none are perfect. Perfection is affirmed but not proved. Perfection is not a human trait.

There exists greatness.

Man can be great.

If the great have excess, the perfect have defect. *Deest aliquid.*

Now defect suppresses perfection, but excess does not suppress greatness. Far from that, it confirms it. Heaven is excess.

Racine, Boileau, Pope, Raphael, Petrarch, Terence, Titus Livius, Cicero, Thucydides, Anacreon, Vergil, represent what it has been agreed to call taste.

With regard to these: Shakespeare, Molière, Corneille, Michelangelo, Dante, Tacitus, Plautus, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Pindar, Isaiah, Æschylus, Homer, if we want a word to sum up all we find but one: Genius.

For the rest, let us say in passing, to be concerned in the formation of a purely local scholastic taste pretending with as much reason as the Roman dogma to be catholic—that is to say, universal, to be choice, picked, expurgated, emasculated according to the rule of a school, of a classic process promulgated once for all as the mathematical code of poetry, of a copybook of expressions, of a formula of inspiration with the peevish mien of punishment—surely all this would be an insult

undeserved by thinkers so illustrious as Anacreon, Vergil, Horace, Terence, Cicero, and Petrarch, very original in the last analysis.

The supposed antagonism of taste and genius is one of the stupidities of the school. No invention could be more grotesque than this of one muse seizing the other by the hair—of Urania and Calliope coming to blows. No, there is nothing of this kind in art. There harmony pervades all, even dissonance.

Taste like genius is essentially divine. Genius is conquest; taste is choice. The all-powerful talon commences by taking all; then the flaming eye does its sorting. This sorting of the prey is taste. Each genius makes it according to his fancy. The epics, themselves differ from one another in humor. The selection of Homer is not the selection of Rabelais. Sometimes what one rejects the other keeps. Both know what they are doing, tho neither can swear as to this; the ideal which is the infinite is above them, and there may well come a day when the heroic

lightning and the sinister thunder intermingle, when a word of Rabelais becomes a word of Homer—and then it is that Cambronne utters it.

Art, like flame, has a power of sublimation. Throw into art, as into fire, poison, ordure, rust, oxide, arsenic, verdigris; pass the incandescent matter through the prism of poetry and you will have a splendid spectrum, and the ugly will become the grand, and evil will become beautiful.

Amazing fact and enrapturing affirmation: evil will enter the beautiful and become transfigured. For the beautiful is nothing else than the holy light of goodness.

In taste as in genius there is something of the infinite. Taste, that mysterious why, that reason for each word employed, that obscure and sovereign preference which, from the depths of the brain, supplies the laws proper to each genius, that second conscience given to poets alone, and as luminous as the other, that imperious intention of invisible limits, is, like inspiration itself, a part of the formida-

ble unknown power. All inspirations come from the same source.

Genius and taste have a unity which is the absolute, and an encounter which is beauty.

Promontorium Somnii

I

THE promontory of dreams! It looms in Shakespeare. It is in all great poets.

In the mysterious world of art there is the summit of the dream. Against the summit of the dream leans Jacob's ladder. Jacob, asleep at the foot of the ladder, is the poet, that dreamer whose soul's eyes are open. On high is the firmament, which is the ideal. The forms, bright or darkling, winged or borne aloft, a star set upon their brow, and mounting the ladder, are the especial creations of the poet, the beings he sees in the penumbra of his mind, ascending toward the light.

This pinnacle of the dream is one of the summits that dominate the horizon of art. A world of poetry, special and individual, radiates thence. On one hand the fantastic; on the other the fantasque, which is the fantastic smiling. From this summit take flight the oceanids of Æschylus, the

cherubim of Jeremiah, the mænads of Horace, the larvæ of Dante, the andryads of Cervantes, the demons of Milton, and the matassins of Molière.

This promontory of dreams sometimes submerges in its shadows the whole of a genius, Apuleius in the past, Hoffmann in our time. It overshadows a whole work, and that work then becomes formidable—witness the Apocalypse. Dizziness dwells upon these heights, which have a precipice—madness. One slope is fearful, the other radiant. On one is John of Patmos, on the other Rabelais. For there exist the tragic dream and the comic dream.

Melpomene, with contracted brows, laments and weeps in vain for the kings; Thalia, Grace as well as Muse, mocks in vain at the people; in vain they take on the semblance of humanity: a superhuman brightness appears in the star-like eyes of these two masks.

Hence poetry is a sort of world apart. 'Tis the world that is not, and the world that is. Deny the existence of Caliban.

Dispute the existence of Tom Thumb. Try now, at least if you are not Boileau himself, the real Boileau, Nicholas, son of Gilles, try not to become interested in *The Man without a Shadow.* Say to Titania, "Thou art not!" If you do, she will give you blow for blow. 'Tis thou, bourgeois, that are not.

Every dreamer has in him this imaginary world. This summit of dreams rises in every brain like the mountain beneath the skies. It is a vague kingdom, full of the unutterable life of Chimæra. Therein is lived the strange life of the clouds. There all is wandering and volatile. There undulate supple forms commingled with thought. The soul is almost flesh, the body is almost spirit. For a need, reality goes the length of uttering the word of Cambronne, and one coarsely names himself Bottom; one fantom cries out to another, "Be silent, prostitute's son!" And like Ariel, one becomes so impalpable as to melt in the perfume of a flower.

It is the impossible which rises and cries

out: "Here!" The being which began as man ends in abstraction. A moment ago it had blood in its veins, now it has light, now it has night, now it has vanished. Try to seize it, it has rejoined the clouds. From the torn and melting reality issues a fantom, like smoke from a firebrand.

Such is the world, at once lunar and terrestrial, bathed in twilight.

As for the amount of comedy that can mingle with the dream, who has not had experience of this? We laugh in our sleep.

Is the lulling to sleep of the body the awakening of unknown faculties, and does it bring us in relation with beings endowed with these faculties but not perceptible to our organs when they are hampered by animal life—that is to say, when we are awake and in full movement of life? Do the phenomena of sleep bring the invisible part of man in communication with the invisible part of nature? In this state do the beings, called intermediaries, converse with us? Do they play with us? Do they make game of us?

This is not the place to broach such questions, which are more scientific in their nature than the ignorance of a certain science believes. We are content to say that those who have made individual observations concerning the amazing life of sleep have discovered many things.

In all times the problem of the body during sleep has attracted and tormented serious metaphysicians. The act of sinking into sleep has certain transparent features; a vague study of this cloudland is possible, and the hidden depths of sleep tempt explorers. It is a sort of pearl-fishing in the ocean of the unknown. What may be gained from the study of sleep particularly preoccupied a grave and sagacious mind of our own time, Jouffroy. Béranger, his friend, would laugh and say to him, "You would grasp the impossible." In truth, we can fix nothing, and consequently affirm nothing in this dim mirage. But certain persistent phenomena are susceptible of coordination, and these, in spite of the mists of slumber, have arrested the attention of

investigators of sleep. All remains hypothesis; nevertheless, without absolutely losing their conjectural character, certain facts have been established. One of these facts has one knows not what of the formidable; it is this: there exists a hilarity of the darkness, the rippling of nocturnal laughter. There are jocund specters.

"The night is malign," declared the naïve credulity of the Middle Ages, giving to this word malign its double meaning.

Art takes possession of this sepulchral gaiety. All Italian comedy is a nightmare, exploding in a laugh. Cassandra, Trivelin, Tartaglia, Pantalon, and Scaramouche, are beasts vaguely incarnated in men; the guitar of Sgaganarelle is made of the same wood as the coffin of the Commander. Hell is disguised as a farce; Polichinelle is doubly deformed vice, peccatum bigibboosum, in the words of the low Latin of Glaber Radulphus; the ghost sews sleeves on his winding-sheet and becomes Pierrot; the scaly, black-faced devil becomes Harlequin; the soul is Columbine.

Man voluntarily dances the *danse macabre,* and, what is strange, he dances it unconsciously. It is in his gayest hour that he is most funereal. A ball in carnival time is a feast of ghosts. The domino is but slightly distinguishable from the shroud. What more lugubrious than the mask a dead face exploited at the feast! The man laughs beneath the mask of death. The Dance of the Witches is given at the Opéra, and the bow of Musard might be made of a shinbone. It would be impossible to choose between a masquerade and a rout of hobgoblins. *Stryga vel masca.* Perhaps it is Rigolboche, perhaps it is Canidie. Brucolacques and victims of hydrophobia are lost in this mob. These white and black sheets might traverse a cemetery without disturbing it. A porter, perchance, addresses a vampire. Who knows whether this obscene rout, in coming hither, has not left empty graves behind? It is not entirely certain that yonder policeman is not taking a skeleton to the station house. Are they drunkards? Are they shadows?

The Mardi Gras descends from la Courtille, even if it does not return to Jehosaphat.

This somnambulism is natural. A certain mental condition partaking of momentary or partial laws of reason is by no means a rare event either among individuals or nations.

It is certain, for example, that the cerebral condition of every autocrat is peculiar. Absolute power intoxicates like genius, but there is this terrible thing about it, that it has nothing to counterbalance it. The man of genius and the tyrant are both possest of a demon; they are both sovereigns; but in the man of genius, reason being equal to power, the mind retains its equilibrium.

In the tyrant, omnipotence being habitually accompanied by complete stupidity, and being purely material besides, the miserable brain wavers momentarily. Then you have such spectacles as Louis XV. teaching the catechism to the little girls of the Parc-aux-Cerfs.

Frequently dreams gain the mastery

over grave men, savants, theologians, bookworms. I no longer recall that very wise, learned and austere man referred to by Claude Binet, that recounted his love assignations with a princess of the blood royal who died one hundred and fifty years ago. David Parens, an oracle of learning of Heidelberg, dreamt that a cat scratched his face, and mentioned it in his journal of the twenty-ninth of December, 1617, with this note: *Somnium sine dubio ominosum.* And this prompts him to observe, "What is the use of fortifying Heidelberg?" Jurieu believed that a cavalry engagement was taking place in his stomach. Pomponatius was so mastered by chimeras that he no longer could eat, drink, sleep, or expectorate; he describes himself as *insomnus et insanus.* Scioppius was evidently of unsound mind when, out of fear of the Jesuits, he put a mask upon each book that he wrote, calling himself in succession, Vargas, Sotelo, Hay, Krigsoeder, Denius, A Fano Sancti Benedicti, Juniperus of Ancona, Grosippus, and Grobinius.

Venerable institutions are no more exempt from insanity than venerable men. The Church damns the grasshoppers. There has been preserved in the register of the cathedral of Laon an episcopal edict (dated 1120) against weevils. In 1516 an official of Troyes issued this order: "To all parties concerned: Doing justice to the request of the inhabitants of Villenoxe, we warn the caterpillars to withdraw within the space of six days, and, in default of this, we declare them accurst and excommunicated." The Parliament of Paris shows itself raving mad by condemning a sow to be hanged as a sorceress. The Sorbonne prohibiting the healing of disease by the use of quinine, "a wicked bark," is stark mad.

Whole multitudes, as we have just indicated, are at the mercy of these epidemics. Even free nations have their fits, just as despots have their whims. Are not the English people, en masse, copying Brummel's necktie as raving-mad as Charles V. making clocks, or Domitian beheading flies? Is any dream more ab-

surd than that of Origen? Assuredly, this one would not seem to be contagious. It is. There exists the cult of voluntary eunuchs. Go to Russia, and you shall find it. The Origenists call themselves Skopzi; there are three thousand of them; and while awaiting the day when the late Czar Peter III., their messiah, shall come to set going the great bell in the Kremlin at Moscow, they mutilate themselves stoically—somnambulists to the point of being no longer men.

A whole science may fall into somnambulism. Medicine, in particular, is subject to this contingency. During the whole of the Middle Ages it was in eclipse, and one might almost say that up to the eighteenth century it lived in a dream. The bolus of Armenia, theriac, the electuary of Sennert, a remedy for diseases of the heart and composed of thirty-two substances, among which were gold, coral, amber, sapphire, emerald and pearl, a famous powder panacea made from the navel of the monkey found near the Persian Gulf—all these remedies seem night-

mares. In reality, they are not. In the name of the Bible they damned Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, just as they did Galileo, the discoverer of the circulation of the worlds. Hygiene was formidable. During a single year, Bouvart, physician to Louis XIII., poured through the veins of the king two hundred and fifteen medicines and two hundred and twelve clysters. The faculties were at war, diagnosis fought drugs; Saint Côme attacked Saint Luke. Physicians declared for Homer, and apothecaries for the Bible; the former claimed to be descended from Machaon and Poladire, and the latter pretended to trace their lineage back to the prophet who invented for Ezekiel the cataplasm of dry figs; Fleurant chose for his ancestor Isaiah. The medical campaign for and against antimony made madmen of Renaudot, Guénaut, Guy-Patin, Courtaud, champion of Montpellier, and Guillemeaut, champion of Paris. In the meantime let die who would. The sick were in a fever and the doctors in a delirium.

At times a whole age goes mad. The Renaissance inoculated Europe with a madness for paganism that lasted three centuries. Théagène and Chariclée and the pastorals of Longus created a sort of mythological civilization of gallants and shepherdesses. La Fontaine wrote:

> "Depuis que la cour d'Amathonte
> S'est enfuie à Bois-le-Vicomte."

Apollo, as a shepherd, was the type that Cardinal Richelieu tried to emulate. In France there was a sort of Gallic Olympus. Gods encountered Druids in the flowery osiers of Lignon. Pastorals were carried to the point of *bergerade.* We are no longer in France, but in Arcadia. "The Extravagant Shepherd" was one of the writings of the time. Ronsard, in love with a woman of the court, changed Estrée into Astrée. Rubens attests that Tritons and Nereids assisted at the landing of Marie de Médicis at Marseilles, and that Mercury took part in her coronation at the church of Saint Denis. Wolfgang Guillaume, Duke of Neuborg, had a

Mount Ida built in his garden and there, squatted upon a stuffed eagle, he discharged a cannon in emulation of Jupiter. Louis XIV., in good faith, simulated the sun.

At Chambord, Marshal Saxe had a regiment of exquisite and fantastic Uhlans; they wore snail-colored coats, green trousers, Hungarian boots, tufted turbans, pikes with streamers; the first company was composed of negroes wearing white uniforms and mounted on white horses; in the rear was a battery of long leather cannons encased in fir-wood and mounted upon small chariots, while at the head of the line was a Chinese band. Count Saxe was accustomed to review this toy regiment in the elaborate uniform of a marshal-general, and having in his train a gondola filled with almost naked goddesses—Junos, Minervas, Hebes, Venuses, Floras, etc., impersonated by girls reared by him in his château of Pipes, near Créteil, and in his smaller residence in the Rue du Battoir.

Even Elizabeth of England had had her

Parnassus and her Olympus. This pedant was worthy to be a pagan. She drest her women as dryads and her footmen as satyrs; at Hampton Court Jest and Laughter danced round her in the persons of her pages. Not being a Catholic, like Marie de Médicis, she did not have herself consecrated by Mercury, but she disdained not to be conducted to her bedroom by that god adorned with the caduceus and winged-heels. One fine day at Norwich, the aldermen presented to her, on a silver plate, a Cupid with a golden arrow in honor of her majesty's fiftieth birthday. Leicester gave a fête in her honor at Kenilworth. There was a pond in the grounds: a chance for mythology. Laneham and Sir Nicholas Lestrange were present and have left an account of the day's events. Arion riding on the back of a dolphin and Triton in the shape of a siren issued from the bushes and sang Leicester's verses to Elizabeth. Suddenly, Arion, whether confused by the presence of the queen, or hoarse from the

dampness, stopt short, tore off his mythological costume, and cried out: "I am not Arion; I am honest Henry Goldingham." Elizabeth, the goddess, laughed. On another occasion also she became a real woman and a queen—namely, when there was occasion to behead Mary Stuart, who was more beautiful than herself.

A writer so mysterious as to be almost uncanny, positivist withal, and practical to the extent of being horrible, carrying obedience to reality to the point of condoning crime, a sort of terrible high priest of the accomplished fact, Machiavelli (who would credit it?) is a victim of dreams. The lines we are about to read are by him:

"I am unable to give the reason for it, but it is a fact attested by ancient and modern history that no great misfortune has ever happened in any city or province without having been predicted by some divine power or announced by some revelation, prodigy, or other celestial sign. It would be very desirable to have the cause of these things investigated by men

learned in natural and supernatural things, an advantage that I do not possess. It may be that our atmosphere is inhabited—as certain philosophers think—by spirits who, by the very laws of their nature, foresee future things, and out of pity toward men warn them by means of signs in order that they may be on their guard. However that may be, the fact itself is certain, and these warnings are always followed by novel and extraordinary events." (Machiavelli, *Discourse on Titus Livius,* 1: 56.)

Machiavellism, therefore, becomes complicated with belief in omens. Machiavelli, the diviner, would have encountered Machiavelli, the augurer, without a smile.

This tendency of man to launch into the impossible and imaginary is the source of *Credo quia absurdum.* In religion it creates idolatry, and in poetry the chimera. Idolatry is an evil thing. Chimera may be beautiful.

A complete art, music, admirable in Italy and still more admirable in Germany, belongs to the realm of dreams.

Music is beautiful in Italy; in Germany it is sublime. This is due to the fact that Italy dreams voluptuousness and Germany love. Hence the smile of Cimarosa and the mighty sob of Glück. Up to now Germany has had the glory of being absolutely supreme in one of the arts, all other nations being obliged to divide among themselves the other arts. The great poet is not Greek, for if there is Æschylus, there is also Isaiah; he is not a Jew, for if there is Isaiah, there is also Juvenal; he is not Latin, for if there is Juvenal, there is also Dante; he is not Italian, for if there is Dante, there is also Shakespeare; he is not English, for if there is Shakespeare, there is also Cervantes; he is not Spanish, for if there is Cervantes, there is also Molière; he is not French, for if there is Molière, there remain all those that we have just enumerated. The great musician is a German.

The great modern German is not Goethe, it is Beethoven.

We have just named Molière. If anything could demonstrate the power of the

dream in art, it would be the fact that it could take possession of Molière.

The day the mountains began to gambol like young rams, the prophet fought against the bewilderment of the prodigy up to the moment when Mount Ararat itself joined the dance. Well, Molière, like all the other poets, entered the realm of dreams.

Molière is Poquelin as Voltaire is Arouet; Molière is the product of the pillar of Halles, he is the pupil of Gassendi, he is the man who attempted to translate Lucretius, he is a skeptic, he is the perpetual critic of his own enthusiasm; he is Alceste but he is Philinte; Molière, like Voltaire, is a great philosopher, but happily he does not carry philosophy to the point of abolishing comedy. Molière is a man of genius, a valet de chambre, an upholsterer. No matter; this disillusioned philosopher, who makes the king's bed, is at times a visionary. "The moon," as Othello says, "has just passed too near the earth." 'Tis done, Molière is hit, like a simple Shakespeare. All of a sudden

Molière has become drunk. He is drunk with the mighty, somber drunkenness that urges tragedy to the slaughter-house and comedy to the farce. Sublime slaughter-house; splendid farce. Molière, in sudden dismay, reels from the overflowing divine cup and, like Horace, cries: Ohe! *Dicit Horatius Ohe!* This sage becomes a madman; and behold the triumph of the fantastic, the grotesque, buffoonery, parody, caricature, eccentricity, excess; Boileau, stiff with terror, "no longer recognizes" Molière; interludes break in upon the scene, the comedy flares up in farce; the mask of Thalia opens its mouth from ear to ear and vomits dancing satyrs, dancing savages, dancing cyclops, dancing furies, dancing attorneys, dancing duns, singing Spaniards, bastinadoed Turks, wildly leaping hobgoblins, muftis, dervishes, bullies that talk slang, bears, Moron in the tree, and Scapin with his sack, and Jupiter with his cloud, and Mercury in Sosia, and Sbrigani, and Pourceaugnac, and Deafoirus, and Desfonandrès; the *bourgeois gentil-*

homme and the *malade imaginaire* reply to ironical reverence, Argan is helmed with a glorified garbage pot, Sorbonnesque Latin rages, mamamouschi talks gibberish, the candle tops take fire, syringes squirt showers, the apotheosis of the apothecary flames forth; and all this madness, O Molière, but enhances thy wisdom!

If this happens to Molière, it will happen to anyone.

The poet is the son of the Muse; he is also the child. But this childhood resembles that of the Nazarean in the temple. It teaches. The doctors listen; its finger is lifted.

A serious and important significance arises from these Lupercals of art. It is the fact that vice is accentuated, that ridicule is besmeared by itself, that the lees is seen on the forehead of the drunkard. Ugliness becomes grotesque. Grimace underlines the character. Physiognomy is carried to the point of blackness. He who is no more than a poltroon is a base creature, he who is but a pedant is an idiot, he who is stupid is a

sot, he who is vile is abject. A whole philosophy issues from buffoonery, which is defect marked by excess. It would seem that farce makes Molière delirious. Therein his most passionate cries are heard and his most profound counsel uttered. That does not prevent the duc de Saint-Aignan from insulting the *bourgeois gentilhomme,* when, taking advantage of the king's silence, he cries out: "Molière is on the down grade. Molière is a thing of the past." *Balachon, Balaba,* what does that mean? Molière is crazy!

Let it be said in passing that this duc de Saint-Aignan, so fine upon the point of common sense, was the same who in 1664, acting as field-marshal at the Versailles fêtes, arraying himself in the Greek fashion, wearing a helmet with red plumes, a cuirass of silver cloth ornamented with little gold shells, and silk stockings, impersonated Guido the barbarian.

Yes, far from being a defect, as superficial critics believe, this fabric of dream inherent in the poet is a supreme gift.

It is needful that there be in the poet a philosopher, and something to boot. He who is lacking in this celestial quality, the dream, is a philosopher only.

This *quid divinum* is revealed by Voltaire in his *Tales*. There alone he is a poet. A striking thing to remark, in his *Tales* Voltaire dreams, and thinks all the more. He issues out of reality and enters into truth. This draft of imagination, drunk by his reason, transfigures him, and this reason becomes divination. Voltaire in his *Tales* divines and lovingly divines the conclusion, nay more, the final catastrophe of the eighteenth century—a catastrophe which would have shocked him as historian. He invents, he imagines, he permits himself conjecture, he loses his foothold, he takes flight. Behold him in the blue empyrean of hypotheses and theories. Starry thought, up to then, had been chained. It is the apparition of the goddess. *Patuit dea.*

In all the other works of the great Arouet there is the restraint caused by the disquieting influence of the master;

the necessity of pleasing power creates a counter-current to good faith: *Is Trajan satisfied?* This cringing reappears incessantly. The courtier embarrasses the thinker. The valet gives bad advice to the Titan; at Versailles he is a gentleman in ordinary; at Potsdam he has his own keys behind his back. Hence platitude when face to face with fact; while in the sphere of imagination the mind recovers its freedom. Candide is sincere; Micromégas is at his ease. When you can be in Sirius at a stride, you are free. In history Voltaire is hardly a philosopher; in the tale he is almost an apostle.

Poets, behold the mysterious law: Go to excess. Let blockheads translate it by *extravagare.* Go to excess; be extravagant, like Homer, like Ezekiel, like Pindar, like Solomon, like Archilochus, like Horace, like Saint Paul, like Saint John, like Saint Jerome, like Tertullian, like Petrarch, like Alighieri, like Cervantes, like Rabelais, like Shakespeare, like Milton, like Mathurin Régnier, like Agrippa d'Aubigne, like Molière, like Voltaire.

Be extravagant with the learned, the just, the wise. *Quos vult AUGERE, Jupiter dementat.*

What pedants style caprice, the imbecile unreason, the ignorant hallucination, what formerly was called sacred madness, what to-day, accordingly as it is one or the other aspect of the dream, is called melancholy or fantasy, that singular state of soul which, persisting in all the poets, has maintained as realities, abstractions, symbols, the lyre, the muse, the tripod, invoked or evoked unceasingly—those strange overtures to unknown inspiration are essential to the profound life of art. Art voluntarily respires the irrespirable. To suppress that is to prevent communication with the infinite. The poet's thought ought to be on a level with extra-human horizons.

Silenus, according to Epicurus, was so pensive a sage that he seemed to be of disordered mind. He became besotted with the infinite. He meditated so deeply upon things that he passed beyond the bounds of life, and one would have said

that he was overcome with wine. This wine was the terrible wine of revery.

The complete poet beholds life in a triple vision: Humanity, Nature, the Supernatural. As regards Humanity and Nature, Vision consists in observation; as regards the Supernatural, Vision is intuition.

A precaution is essential here; one must fill oneself with human science. Above all and in spite of all, be a man. Do not fear to surcharge yourself with humanity. Ballast your mind with reality and then throw yourself into the sea.

The sea is inspiration.

Properly speaking all lofty intellectual ideas proceed from inspiration—from the unknown. Inspiration is an aspect of will. *Flat ubi vult.*

We have here the grand effluvium. The different orders of facts connected with inspiration inundate from all sides the region of dreams and the creations of imaginative poetry. This majestic psychic phenomenon, inspiration, governs the whole of art, of tragedy as of comedy,

the ballad as well as the ode, the psalm as well as the satire, the epic as well as the drama. For the moment, however, we are considering but a detail of this vast ensemble.

Therefore let poets dream, let artists dream, let philosophers dream: let all thinkers be dreamers. Revery is fecundation. The inherence of the dream in man explains a whole phase of history, and creates a whole realm of art. Plato dreamed Atlantis; Dante, the Paradise; Milton, the Garden of Eden; Thomas More, the City Utopia; Campanella, the City of the Sun; Hall, the Mundus Alter; Cervantes, Barataria; Fénelon, Salente.

Only do not forget this: it is essential that the dreamer be stronger than the dream. Otherwise danger. Every dream is a struggle. The possible does not verge upon the real without a certain mysterious anger. A brain may be devoured by a chimera.

Who has not seen a certain horrible drama unfolded among the tall grass in the springtime. The May-bug, a poor

undeveloped larva, has buzzed and fluttered about, met with accidents in dashing itself against walls, trees, men; it has fed upon every branch of green that it could find, it has beat against every glass where it saw the light; it was not life, but a groping, an attempt toward life. One fine evening it falls to the ground; it is eight days old; it is a centenarian. It dragged itself through the air; it drags itself along the ground; it crawls exhausted through the tufts of grass, and the moss; pebbles halt it, a grain of sand impedes it, the tiniest bit of spear-grass is an obstacle to its progress. All of a sudden as it is rounding a blade of grass, a monster descends upon it. It is a beast who has been lying there in ambush, a necrophore, the *jardinière,* a splendid and agile scarabæus, green purple and flaming gold, a piece of jewelry armed, which runs and has claws. It is a warrior insect, helmed, cuirassed, spurred, caparisoned: the chevalier brigand of the grass.

Nothing is more formidable than to see it issue from the shadow, sudden, unex-

pected, extraordinary. It hurls itself upon the traveler. The aged creature has no strength left, its wings are dead, it can not escape. Now something terrible happens. The scarabæus lays open the insect's belly, into which it plunges its head, then its leathern corselet; it digs and scoops, disappears up to its middle in the wretched creature and eats it alive upon the spot. The victim writhes, struggles, makes despairing efforts, catches at the grass, pulls, tries to fly, and drags along the monster which is eating it.

Such is man in the grip of madness. There are dreamers who are like this poor insect, who have never learned to fly and who can not walk; the dream, dazzling and formidable, hurls itself upon them, empties them, devours them, destroys them.

Revery is a species of digging. To leave the surface, either to mount or to descend is always adventure. To descend, especially, is a grave act. Pindar hovers, Lucretius plunges. Lucretius takes the greater risk. Asphyxia is more formidable than a fall. Hence more dis-

quiet among lyric poets who explore the ego than among lyric poets who take soundings in the skies. The "I" is the dizzy spiral. To explore it excessively strikes terror into the dreamer.

For the rest, all the regions of dreamland should be ventured upon with caution. These encroachments upon the darkness are not without danger. Revery has its dead, madmen. One encounters here and there in these shadows corpses of intelligence, Tasso, Pascal, Swedenborg. These explorers of the human soul are miners exposed to great danger. Sinister things happen at these depths. There occur explosions of fire-damp.

II

The antique Olympus almost made visible this promontory of dreams whose shadow we have shown projected upon the human mind. In Olympus there appears the summit of the dream. The chimeras proper to the thought of man have never become plastic to that extent.

The mythological dream is almost palpable, a fact due to the definiteness of its form.

The impression left by Olympus upon the human brain is so strong that after two thousand years of Christian encroachment upon imagination we need, thanks to Greek and Latin classical training, to put forth but slight effort to perceive distinctly in the depths of the heavens the eternal mountain upon whose summit is spread the feast of omnipotence. There in the azure skies smile the twelve passions of mankind, in the form of goddesses.

Excessive familiarity with mythology has made its outward aspect banal. Whenever we pierce through the surface, no matter how little, its grand enigmatic meaning is revealed. The crowd has been so much amused with the story that it has given little attention to the myth; but this multiple myth is none the less a powerful creation of human wisdom, and whoever has meditated upon the intimate unity of religions will take seriously

this pagan symbolism at which have labored, according to the narrative of Herodotus in his "Disciples," all the magi of Asia during a period of five thousand years, and, coming down to a later date, all the Greek thinkers from Eumolpus, father of Musæus, to Cicero's master, Posidonius.

Fiction is the drapery of facts. Allegory raves, but logic listens with attention. Mythology, apparently insensate and delirious, is the receptacle of reality. History, geography, geometry, mathematics, nautical science, astronomy, physics, morality—all is in this reservoir; the whole of science is visible through the troubled waters of fable. Nothing is more wonderful, I might almost say nothing is more pathetic, than to see proceeding from this source wherein smokes and roars the torrent of dreams, the two great currents of human reason—the Ionian philosophy, and the Italic philosophy: Thales foreshadowing Theophrastus, Pythagoras foreshadowing Epicurus.

Christianity is more human in one sense, and less in another, than paganism. It is the merit of Christianity to be human on the beautiful side. Paganism does not choose; it adapts itself to humanity, to humanity as it is and as a whole. Therein lie advantages and defects of pagan symbolism. Scratch the god and you find the man.

Be that as it may, whoever curiously studies polytheist mythology in the poets and philosophers will experience the sensation of a discovery; the thing that is reputed banal takes on life and freshness; deep-searching has made it seem new. The religious significance is always striking. The legendary detail often has the charm of the unforeseen.

We have lost the sense of familiarity with all these gods. But one may still attain to some mental conception of the influence of the pagan theogony upon the ancient civilization. A strange light falls from Olympus upon man, upon the beast, upon trees, upon inanimate things, upon life, upon destiny. This apotheosis

was felt by all mankind. It was disquieting and full of charm, and at times its brilliance was tragic.

Be a pagan and try to live a tranquil life; impossible. The ubiquity of the divine harasses you. It overwhelms the pantheist by its immanence; it obsesses the polytheist by its apparitions and disappearances. It masks, unmasks, remasks. There goes on a species of perpetual pursuit, and nothing is more troubling than this imperturbable coming and going of the supernatural in nature. For the pagan the Divine is swarming. His whole religion is Protean.

The pagan lives panting. What is this? it is a field; no, it is a nymph. What is this? it is a hill; no, it is an oread. What is this? it is a stone; no, it is the god Lapis who can change you into a tortoise or a toad. What is this? it is a tree; no, it is Priapus. What is this? it is water; no, it is a woman. Take heed of water. It is treacherous like Venus. The ocean has its nereid and the pond its limniad. If you are sailing, Poseidon will

lay snares for you; beware of Brise-Vaisseaux. Egeon is beneath the foam. Beware of encountering the seven isles of Vulcan; you will never issue from their straits. You will have no other resource than to cut off your right hand in honor of Mulciber, and your left hand in honor of Tardipes, who are the same god, Vulcan. This cripple would have you maimed. Avoid also the islands of Echinades; it is there that Neptune Ypeus hides the maidens that he carries off, and he loves not the curious. You will divine the right route and the meaning of the presages you encounter, if perchance you have in your crew a Telmessian sailor, for at Telmesse everyone is born divine.

A port appears: do not enter it—the tempest is preferable; it is guarded by the god Palemon who holds in his right hand a key. Attention: I believe that packet loaded with shells, coming down the river, is a Glaucus; the Glaucuses are three and very wicked. Offer a sacrifice to Elpis, to the Goddess Hope, and to the Muses crowned with the hideous

wings torn from the sirens; shun the Erynnedes, the elder sisters of the Eumenides; and, in the evening do not go to sleep in your sail-cloth hammock without having adored the seven stars, the crown of Clotho, the Parcae who spin, less evil than Lachesis who turns and Atropos who cuts. Tremble at beholding through the sea-foam the fire of Lynceus on the tower of Lyrcos and the fire of Hypermenestra on the tower of Larissa. Lighthouses are fantoms. Do not touch that bottle; it perhaps contains a giant. A bottle burst open gives exit to a hurricane.

Above all do not confound Tethys with Thitis; you should be lost. Do not quarrel with the Aurora, mother of the Winds. Try to keep on good terms with Busiris, the god of pirates and king of Spain. It is also useful at times to invoke Eudemonia, the goddess of Lucullus. If Demogorgon, the old man in the center of the earth is taken with a fit of coughing, it will make the waves dance, and you may well be shipwrecked. Burn some

nail-parings in honor of the two terrible sisters, Pephredo and Enyo, who came into the world with white hair. One is the wave, the other the surf. I do not speak of quicksands, acroceraunes, shells, the hounds that bay beneath the waves. So many waves, so many snares. Sing a hymn to Bonus Eventus, the husband of the Waters, and to Rubigus, the husband of Flora. Bonus Eventus will perhaps induce the waters to spare you, and Rubigus will persuade Flora to receive you. Flora is the earth. If the earth is in good humor, if Night has not brought down her torch with too hard a crash upon her head, if you offer her a libation from a full jar of the good wines of Mount Tmolus, if you are rich enough to have in your vessel a statue of Jupiter and a statue of Æsculapius, both made of gold and ivory, and that of Æsculapius smaller by half than that of Jupiter, if you are devoted to Gorgon and ready to kiss her arm of flesh in order to escape her hand of brass, if all your life long you have humbly saluted,

in passing, the altars dedicated to the gods on high and the ditches dedicated to the gods below, finally if you have never insulted the junons of women, you have a chance to disembark. You are on land.

Good. A question: have you in setting foot on shore, thought of the six divine pairs, the Consentes? No? I pity you. The informer, Ascalaphus, probably will have denounced you. Ceres will be furious. She will stir up the Atlantes against you. Expect misfortunes. You are going to hear buzzing about your ears Mellona, goddess of the bees. The thing is done. She has stung you. A swelling. Menidemus died of one. Bubona, goddess of ox-drivers, will gore you with her horns. The god Domiducas will refuse to conduct you home; the god Jugatinus will make you a cuckold. Draw out of the affair as best you may, salute in a loud voice Ops, Idea, Berycynthia, Dindymene, Vesta Prisca and Vesta Tellus, offer marjoram and a purple and yellow veil to Hymeneus, beat a drum in honor

of the ten Dactyli; you may now be slightly reassured. In the meanwhile do not seat yourself on your grass; it will poison you. You have a captive with you: then avoid the temple, it is the temple of Leucothöe; it is closed to female slaves; avoid entering that one also and pass it quickly; it is a temple Opertum and men do not enter it. Turn aside from that grove, it is sacred; Menads are there and you may be bitten by their lynx. Dread these leaves of a certain brightness, they are the corymbus of Dione.

Hold fast! your horse has thrown you; I expected as much, and the thing is plain enough; you forgot that Neptune is called Hippius, and you did not throw any haircloth into the sea. Let this lesson profit you. Press the breast of the first nurse you meet and spill a drop of milk in honor of each city which is the birthplace of a god. For the gods have a country. Priapus is from Lampsacos, Saron is from Corinth; Proteus is from Tentyris in Egypt. You know from the slightest reading of Pindar that Silenus is from

Maleos, and if you have read the least bit of Herodotus you are not ignorant of the fact that Neptune is a Libyan. Apropos, before setting out on this voyage did you confide your patrimony to Jupiter Horius of Hellas and to Jupiter Terminalis of Latium? If not, it is likely you shall never see your farm again. Mercury, when he stole the mountain Phrygos from King Othreus, made such a thorough job of it that no man ever laid his hand on it again. There were four Anticyræ; there are now but three; Mercury stole one of them. And the consequence is that madness can no longer be cured. It was Mercury who filched the great road that led to Testudopolis, so that now the city can no longer be found. Walk with prudence. What is it that you are about to meet? a peasant manuring his land and a peasant mowing his wheat. Not at all. These are two genii. One is Pilumnus, the god of the furrow; the other is Picumnus, the god of the millstone. Be on your guard, the goddess Anna Perinna is seated behind these

shepherds who are purifying their flocks with sulphur smoke. Venerate that dunghill, it is perhaps Saturn. Saturn is called Sterculius.

Your dog yelps; here you are before your house. The door is shut. Have you the key? Let us hope that the bolt and lock have not been tampered with by the surly cousin of Apollo, Clathra, the locksmith goddess of the Etruscans. The key turns, the door opens; a miracle, enter. Do not embrace anyone; run first to the household god. Has he been well cared for? He ought to be in a corner, but not in a hollow. He loves shade, but abhors dust. Has the baby's bulla been well hung round its neck? He is your domestic teacher. Be more respectful to him than to your father. For every man there are the lares in the home and the manes in the sepulcher. Woe to whoever neglects these two friends! They become enemies. Fear the Superi, stand in terror of the Inferi. Make a gift to the spirit Phito, the Rich-Unhappy who urges on and scours. Dis, Hades, Orcus, Februus: four

disquieting names. The lower regions open at every step that a man takes. Yonder is horror. Charon signifies anger. In this darkness are Acheron, that is to say anguish; Cocytus, that is to say tears; the Styx, that is to say silence; Lethe, that is to say forgetfulness. The Olympians are harsh. Aristander of Telmessus visited hell and saw there the soul of Hesiod bound to a pillar of brass and gnashing its teeth, and the soul of Homer hung to a tree. Homer and Hesiod are there for having said too many things about the gods. The fifth of the seven Xenophons, the author of the Book of Prodigies, also made a visit to hell; he gave testimony of the punishment inflicted upon men who have not fulfilled their conjugal duties, and this recital has made this philosopher respected by the Crotoniates.

Now embrace your wife. Inform yourself whether, during your absence, she has followed carefully the admonitions of the household god which are: "Do not clean your chair with oil"; "Do not have

a graven image upon your ring"; "Do not seat yourself upon the bushel"; "Hide the trace of the pot in the ashes; always keep your garments folded; be careful not to wash your face while turning toward the sun." Now is the time to salute your neighbor; it is necessary to be diplomatic about it; he may have a household god that is more powerful than yours. The demons attached to each man are of unequal power. The genie of Antony feared that of Augustus. In speaking to this neighbor endeavor to penetrate his thought, and invoke in a low voice Momus, the god who tries to open a window in a man's heart. Next, take your walk. Ah! the Hamadryads are to be considered. Concern yourself with Lucas, god of branches; he is a strange and bizarre personage. The woods belong to drinkers and thieves; do not go therein without recommending yourself to the nymph Nicea, friend of Bacchus, or to the nymph Yptime, mistress of Mercury. Do not let Nicea or Yptime cause you to forget Callisto. that of Jupiter; and as

regards Echo, do not speak to her of Pan; you will make Pythis jealous. These precautions taken, you can take a walk in the woods. Above all, when returning home in the evening, avoid the marsh by the wayside and do not listen to the prattling of the reeds about King Midas. This ass is a god.

This gives some idea of the breathless life of the pagan. Polytheism is the waking dream pursuing man.

Was all this matter of belief? Without any doubt. Onomacritus was driven out of Athens for having been surprized in the act of employing the incantations of Musæus in an endeavor to cause the neighboring islands of Lemnos to be swallowed up by the sea. He took refuge in Persia and avenged himself for his expulsion by unchaining Xerxes upon Greece. Hence the attack of Asia upon Europe.

Further, it was belief in chimeras that caused the vast catastrophe wherein Greek civilization almost foundered: and behold the logic—without this traitor-madman Onomacritus there would be no heroic Leonidas.

Ah! you do not believe in these chimeras! Do you know who is astonished at your astonishment? Horace.

> "Somnii, terrores magicos, miracula, sagos,
> Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Thessala rides?"

And Vergil adds: *Non temnere divos.* The great Olympians, besought for the purpose, willingly came to the aid of small peoples; these powerful ones succored the feeble; thanks to Belus-Apollo the Ethiopians beat Cambyses, and thanks to Megale, who is no other than Juno, the Massagetes overcame Cyrus.

At all times the gods have hated importunity. "It is dangerous," says Herodotus, "to wish for many things." One is for or against these gods, but all affirm them. No one doubts them. Æschylus, out of devotion to Saturn, is an enemy of Jupiter. This same Æschylus speaks not without anxiety of the three Phorcydes who have but a single eye and a single tooth, of which they make use one after another. The magician Aceratos fright-

ened Alexander by proposing to him to replace Bucephalus by Pegasus, a steed which unhorsed the Bellerophons and at a leap reached the stars, the only stabling worthy of him. Every prudent traveler who crosses Lybia carefully boots himself for fear of serpents, and wraps his mantle round his head because of the drops of blood that fall from the severed head of Medusa, who goes to and fro in these heavens. *De terra anguis, de cœlo sanguis.* Eurylochus, that choleric philosopher who pursued his cook into the street, a smoking spit charged with meat in his hand—this Eurylochus, disciple as he was of Pyrrho himself, believed firmly in all these gods on the word of Stobæus and of Sextus Empiricus; he was a high priest, tho that proves nothing.

Apollodorus the Calculator, recounts that Pythagoras sacrificed a hecatomb on the day he discovered the square of the hypothenuse. Democritus, seeing that his agony coincided with the holidays, had warm bread applied to his nostrils so as not to die during the fêtes of Ceres. Soc-

rates did not dare die without sacrificing a cock to Æsculapius.

All this chimera is full of boomerangs. One must be careful lest in offending one of these gods he angers several. There are relationships in this nightmare; these monsters live a family life in the darkness. The Gorgons are aunts of Polyphemus and sisters of the serpent of the Hesperides. And how much mysterious meaning there is in these allegories! Does the word, nymph, come from the Greek *lymph,* water, or from the Phenician *nephas,* soul? The mystery is contagious. One is caught there, one is seized in a quicksand. Whoever studies it becomes entangled in it. Philosophers come to participate in this mythological life. Hercules, in a dream, commands the kings of Sparta to trust in Pherycides. Pythagoras one day chanced to be in a state of undress before his three hundred disciples who with himself governed the Itahots, and they all saw that he had a cuisse d'or. On another occasion as he is crossing the river Nessus, the river called

him by name in a loud voice: Pythagoras! Crates, the Gatekeeper, put his finger over his mouth every time he saw a hole in the ground, lest it might be the hole of a worm, and when asked why he did this he said: "They are there!" Pausanias, on coming out of the cave of Trophonius, was like a drunken man. When alone in a deserted place, one dared not speak aloud lest someone should reply. Everything is to be feared because of the possible presence of a god. The panic terror is such that one fairly flies through the woods.

One sees that, back of the mythology which is the common ground of the rhetoric of Demonstier and Chompre, there is another mythology, almost unknown. It is seen here and there in Apuleius, in Strabo, in Aulus Gellius, in Philostratus, in Longus, in Hesychius, in the *Lexicon Græcum Iliadis et Odysseæ* of Apollonius of Alexandria, in the *Theogonie* and the *Bouclier* d'Hercule, in Étienne of Byzantium, mutilated as it is, even in Suidas read in a certain fashion,

finally in Lactantius, who while refuting paganism, tells its story, searches its depths and explains it. We have just slightly lifted the curtain that concealed these fables.

All this phantasmagoria of polytheism when studied in its actual origins regains its real form. These gods, so well known and well worn, resemble others. Thus, it is in Lactantius alone that the well-known Circe of operas and cantatas is found to be that strange magician of sailors, Marica, wife of Faunus. Further, everyone knows the Teleboes, the people who employed that ill-advised warrior of Amphitryon while Jupiter was making Hercules, and who later colonized Caprea, destined to Tiberus; but to obtain some idea of the demigod, Taphius, who gave his name to their island, Taphos, and of his mother Hippothoë, Neptune's concubine, it is necessary to read the scholiast of Apollonius. Further, the proverbial ax of Tenedos, consecrated to the temple of Delphi, the queer symbol of Apollo,

can only be explained in Suidas as the crawfish of the stream Asserina, whose shell was the shape of an ax. Finally, if we follow the goddess as far as the Alempharmagues of Nicander, a quite unexpected Venus reveals herself. There Venus has a dispute with the lily; this quarrel between two kinds of whiteness ends badly; Venus, being jealous, places in the lovely heart of the lily what we still see there and what Nicholas Richelet calls *"la vergogne d'un âne." Virgam asini.* Here a vague sketch of Titania and Bottom seems to emerge.

III

Man has need of dreams.

The antique chimera was succeeded by the Gothic chimera.

The invisible stage manager whistles. The gigantic scenery of the impossible changes. The bands of the clouds and of the heavens are no longer the same. We fall from one chimera into another. The

winged heads which were Cupid's are cherubins.

There looms forever upon the horizon, upon the earth and at the same time outside of the earth, a mountain: it was Olympus, it is Golgotha. The projection of a vast mountain's shadow over the mysterious deep: nothing can be more sinister. As this summit is an idea it is more than a mere height, it is a kind of domination.

The tombs at the foot of the mountain have been emptied of their ghostly occupants, and remained open. Brightnesses in human form wander about. Twilight apparitions abound. Superstitions take form. *Diablerie* begins. One sees in the foreground, abbeys, châteaux, clean-cut cities, ill-favored hills, rocks with their anchorites, serpentine rivers, prairies, enormous roses. The mandragora resembles an eye wide open. Peacocks fanning their tails are gazed at by naked women, who perhaps are spirits. The stag with the crucifix between his horns drinks in a lonely place at the lake. The angel of

judgment holding a trumpet is seated upon a peak. Old women file past the gates. The bluebird sings in the trees. The landscape is deformed but charming. The flowers are heard singing.

Enter upon the scene Psyllæ, swimming things, alungles, demon-heads, divinities, solipedes, asproles, monoculi, vampires, leeches. diacogynes, striges, masks, salamanders, unguliques, spurge-flax, voultes, troglodytes, creatures haggard from somnambulism, some dancing on one foot, others seeing with one eye, men with horses' hoofs, women resembling serpents, and the phalles invoked by sterile virgins, and the tarascons all covered with hair-weed, and drees, their teeth gnashing in the phosphorescence. The Wili, delicate, volatile and terrible, stops the passing knight and promises him "a shirt whitened by the moonlight." Solomon, who worshiped Chomas, the idol of the Amorites, the horned god of the Patagonians appears. The ewaipoma prowl about; these are men whose heads are in their breasts and whose eyes are un-

der their collar bones. Comets are descried in the depths of the livid skies.

Let us be permitted to use the word *chimerism*. It will serve as a common name for all theogonies. The diverse theogonies are, without exception, idolatry in one sense and philosophy in another. The whole of their philosophy, which contains what is true in them, is summed up in the word religion; and the whole of their idolatrous side, which includes their political content, may be summed up in the word chimerism.

This stated, let us continue.

In Gothic chimerism man becomes bestialized. The beast which he approaches takes a step on its own account; it assumes something of the human that is disquieting. The wolf is Sir Isengrin, the owl is Doctor Sapiens.

To encounter a tarantula is something hideous. It is found in plenty on the mountain Reventon. It is there in its haunt, hidden under the soft oats. It has a turret upon its fortress like a baron, a tapestry on its wall like a courtezan, and

a brilliance in its eyeball like a tiger. It has a door which it locks with a bolt. In the evening it will open its door and wait, crouching in the angle of its tubular cavern. Woe to whoever passes by! Those whom it has stung set about a search for themselves, find themselves, take themselves by the hand, and begin dancing the dance that never ceases; the feet are wasted away; they dance on their shins; the shins worn away, they dance on their knees; the knees worn away, they dance on their thighs; the thighs worn away, they dance on the torso which has become a stump; the torso is worn away, and the dancers have at last become nothing more than dancing heads, which, surrounded by fragments of ribs, have the effect of claws, so that one might call them immense tarantulas: the spider has changed them into spiders.

This ring of heads wears away the earth, digging a horrible circle, and disappears. In the Pyrenees these circles are called *oule* (*olla*, pot). There is the *oule* of Héas. Gavarnie is an *oule*.

God makes no great gains from the Gothic fantasmagoria. Man does not become an adult until that day when his brain contains in its plenitude and simplicity the conception of the divine. The multiplied god of antiquity was the only one that the Middle Ages could comprehend. Christ has hardly made a diversion in the ranks of fetishism. A pagan Christianity swarms under the Gospel. The discarded vestments of Olympus are utilized. Saint Michael takes from Apollo his lance. Python is baptized Satan. The third theological virtue, Charity, inherits the six breasts of Cybele. I suspect the good god Bonus Eventus of having cunningly perpetuated himself under the name of Saint Bonaventure. Providence, formerly dispersed in the form of lares and penates, crumbles anew, and you may now see it in its smallest form. It is the house fairy, the wanton of the alcove, the cricket of the hearth. Formerly thunder, it has become a squeak. It becomes the house cat, and it lies in wait and catches that

species of mouse, the devil. Paganism has diminished, but persists. The love feast becomes church-ale; the bacchanal becomes the chienlit. The god has shrunk to a demon, the faun turns into an imp, the cyclops is foreshortened into a gnome.

The characteristic of superstition is that it grows again from the slip. Idolatry engenders idolatry. One fetish is engrafted upon another. The common well of human error is by no means exhausted by the first chimera. Jupiter Capitolinus has done double duty; the first time as Jupiter, the second time as Saint Peter. Go and see him; he is at the present hour in Michelangelo's great basilica; good Catholic women have worn away his great toe of brass with their kisses. They have merely changed his thunderbolt into a bunch of keys.

I was but a child when my mother, visiting Rome, showed me him. An army grenadier was on duty guarding the statue; a bantering and Voltairian soldiery that, and not used to winning small battles. Seeing the bearded man of

bronze seated there, I asked, "What is that?" "It is a saint," replied my mother. *"No,"* said the soldier, *"it is Jupiter-Jupin-Tremblement, the good god of the devil."*

Reality has vanished as completely in the Middle Ages as in antiquity. Christianity, by reason of its saints, is a polytheism. Nevertheless it is not a copy of the past: no servility; hardly a vague resemblance here and there. In these logarithms of the imagination, one term more suffices to change all. It is an unheard-of new world. Of these unheard-of worlds there are as many as there are vanities of human credulity. None surpasses the Gothic legend. On high, mirage; below, vertigo. Zigzag fantasies pell-mell complicate the horizon: land where there should be sea, sea where there should be land. It is the geography of nightmare. The super-portion of history upon all this deforms it. London is called Troynevant. Tamerlane becomes Tamburlaine. Saint-Magloire is the same as Saint-Malo, which is the same

as Saint-Maclou, which is the same as Macclean, which is the same as Meg-Lin, which is the same as Linus. England is the daughter of Iule, the grandson of Ascanius. There is a lord Ucalegon, born in that palace of Troy whose bursting into flames hastened the flight of Æneas.

Passing, floating, gliding, galloping, are seen indistinct beings made of the substance of a dream, compact of cloud and soul; Robin Goodfellow, the white lady, the black lady and the red lady; Famo, king of Vendes; Will o' the Wisp, the Hobby-Horse, Adonis and Amadis; the peevish monk, the Lord of Misrule, Palmerin d' Olive, and all the lily-virgins, and all the tulip-women, Yolande, Yseult, Yanthe, Griseldis, Vivian, and la belle Glynire in love with the Duke of Cavreuse, and la belle Esclarmonde in love with Huon de Guyenne, and la belle Maguelonne in love with Pierre de Provence, and la belle Raymonde in love with le beau Raymond, and la belle Marianne in love with I no longer know whom. Below these is Gaudisse, admiral of Babylon.

Facing Gaudisse is Galafre, admiral of Anfalime; Ivoirin, another admiral, comes and goes. All Saracens.

On the borders of the neighboring forest, the squirrel, Queen Mab's carpenter, chats with the handworm, the fairies' coachmaker. Through the roadway of the ravine, drawn by thirty yoke of oxen, appears the may-tree, loaded with blossoms, the mighty plume of spring. The fanfare of the horn of Huon de Bordeaux resounds as powerful in the kingdom of magic as the trumpet of Triton which put the giants to flight. Saint Martha has her foot upon the dragon. The wolf Urian makes Aix-la-Chapelle his own. The fairy Vaucluse, clothed in clear water, distracts Saint Trophime who is building the church of Arles. Four warriors engage in battle the idol Borvo-Tomona, who gives his name to the house of Bourbon. Under a canopy of holly is seen the head of the templar which, accordingly as the nearby springs are cold or warm, gives forth oracles or utters blasphemies. The fadet cries: Ho! ho!

Tronc-le Nain roams about the Round Table whereat sits Isaiah the Sad, son of Tristan and Yseult. Vice says: I am named Ambidexter.

Two nights of magic, Midsummer and Christmas, flame forth at the beginning and end of the year. Whoever would give battle to spirits has but to go forth on Midsummer's Night, at twelve, and gather the grain of the fern which renders him invisible. This grain appears above the earth on the very night Saint John was born. Every peasant girl who goes to the fountain with Christmas lupine in her mouth returns with her cloak full of jewels. The young girls wander about the fields tearing up all the plants in their path in order to find the piece of coal which, placed under their pillow, will reveal their future husband in a dream.

Mingled with all this is heard the clanking of famous swords: Durandal, Joyeuse, Courtain, Excalibur. The Duke of Guyenne makes his entry into Babylon. Charlemagne desires the four great

grinder-teeth of Admiral Gaudisse. The King of Hyrcania gives a supper to some of his sultan friends. Agrapardo, prince and giant of Nubia, endeavors to frighten away the angels who are bringing the house of the Blessed Virgin to Loretto. In the meantime Astolphe travels to the moon.

The moon itself is so strange, uncanny and disquieting that it has troubled many sages from Plato to Fourier; and for these visionaries the Gothic vision has not sufficed. The moon is not only Diana, it is Titania. Moonlight is faery. Go fasting under the church porch on a moonlight midsummer's night, and you shall see the ghosts of those destined to die during the year flitting across the churchyard. Nocturnal disputes of lunar demons disturb the dreams of sleeping men.

Do you care to have long ears? Rub your head at moonrise with the semen of the young ass, *cum semine aselli,* and you obtain the success desired—you will have an ass's head.

For Chaucer the moon is "Cynthia

with black feet and white horns." Everybody knows what is seen in the moon, namely, a man followed by a dog and carrying fagots. Whoever does not see this man will be changed into spurge-laurel. Why? Because this man is Cain. Dante does not say, "The moon wanes"; he says (*Hell, Canto XX*): "Already Cain with his load of thorns touches the sea below Seville."

These are indeed dreams. *Promontorium Somnii.* Waking dreams. For let us insist, sleep is not an essential condition. "The beasts which we see during sleep," to employ the expression found in an old book, are seen by man in his waking state. The satyr is the natural inhabitant of the pagan wood, as the hobgoblin is of the Christian marsh. Berbiguier de Terreneuve du Thym used to pass the time in catching demons between two brushes which he would violently rub together.

Every rustic fence enclosing a field was bestridden by a spirit. The Witches' Dance takes place in the orchards

under the stars, and in the morning the cowherd women show one another *cheveux de corrigan* hanging on the branches of apple-trees. The small-hipped serpentine maidens of the pond-lilies sway to and fro in the evening breezes. There are meadow fairies which are browsed upon by goats in the day-time, and by the capricorn at night. At the distant sound of the matin bell, heath and moorland have often beheld, moving toward the springs to drink, the fabled dolmens, menhirs and crowlicks—those mighty blocks of stone that the pensive shepherd leans upon at daybreak, gazing the while into space as tho his thoughts would fain clothe themselves in the seamless garments of the clouds.

Alas, the Middle Ages are melancholy. Poor feudal-serf! let us not cheapen his dream. It is about all that he possesses. His field does not belong to him, his roof does not belong to him, his cow does not belong to him, his family does not belong to him, his breath does not belong to him, his soul does not belong to him. The

seigneur owns his carcass, the priest owns his soul. Between them both the serf vegetates: half in one hell, half in the other. Beneath his naked feet is that fatal thing, the earth. He is forced to walk upon it, and it clings to his heels, now mud, now ashes. He is half earth. He crawls, drags, pushes, carries, whines, obeys, weeps. He is clothed in rags; he has a cord round his loins which, at the slightest infraction of rules, mounts to his neck. His master's only contact with him is through the blow of a stick; his children are puny; his wife, hideous from misery, is hardly a female; he lives in destitution, in silence, in stagnation, in fever, in fetidness, in abjectness, in a dunghill; hidden in his hole, he is, as regards intelligence, brother to the hens, to the hog, to ordure; he is soaked with rain in winter and with sweat in summer; he makes white bread and eats black bread; he owes to the lord all that the lord may desire: respect, statute labor, tithes, his wife. If his wife is old or too horrible, his daughter is taken. Every tree is a

possible gibbet. He bears a heavier yoke round his neck than the ox; if he garners he is a marauder; if he hunts he is a poacher; if he breathes he is impudent; if he looks up he is insolent; if he speaks, cut down this rascal! He is hot, he is cold, he is hungry, he is afraid. His work is toil in the morning and exhaustion in the evening. At nightfall he returns home, weary, sad, humble, and sleeps. What is his bed? a little straw. What is his pillow? a log. "A good round log," says Harrison. Behold him sleeping, this worm of the earth. He indeed deserves this visit to the infinite.

What domes! What porticoes! What columns! What stars! This palace of the impossible—men would fain dwell in it forever. It is splendid, lofty, deep, prodigious, magnificent, colossal, fragile. Most frequently it crumbles away before we reach its threshold, sometimes at the instant of our arrival, sometimes after we have been installed therein, lived there, eaten, drunk, sung, laughed, and made love for many nights. The contin-

ual vanishing of all dreams disconcerts not a single hope. We live on questionings of the world of imagination. Our entire destiny awaits upon the expected response. Every morning each one packs up his trunk of reveries and sets out for the California of dreams. Go now, and tell him he is dreaming. It is yourself who would be the fool. All have faith, there are no doubters.

Whosoever we may be, we are adventurers of the world of our thoughts. There is no dweller on this earth but has his fancy, his caprice, his passion, his fears, his stake, his chance of glory, virtue or advantage, his ascent or fall, his secret lottery. This one constructs his building in secret. All follow an aim. Never any hesitation. Absolute confidence. Nothing is comparable to the *aplomb* of illusion. All these vain human shadows, you and I, all are journeying onward, each fantom bearing his ambition poised upon his head. Cæsar reconstructing monarchy at Rome, Napoleon building up the Continental System,

Alexander of Russia contriving the Holy Alliance, are like Perette carrying upon her head her pail of milk—the crown of the world. The historian gathers up the shattered pieces, now at the foot of Pompey's statue, now at Saint Helena, now at Taganrog. Owing to unknown complications, these earthly calculations miscarry. At times the premeditated idea is not hatched, and another, better or worse, is born. Julius Cæsar who dreamed of kings produced emperors, more portentous than kings. The bird broods on a sparrowhawk, the shell breaks, a vulture is hatched. At times one of two contraries proves practicable. Hannibal dreamed of annihilating Rome, Cato dreamed of destroying Carthage: somber duel of two ideas in the mysterious shadows. The Roman dream grapples with the Punic dream and kills it.

Man lives in a bedlam of chimera. Each one makes his Russian campaign. There is always an unexpected Rostopchine. Moscow will burn, my poor fellow. No matter. Onward we go. Bonaparte

no more foresaw Rostopchine than Cæsar foresaw Casca, and the one crossed the Niemen as the other crossed the Rubicon. Pity them, and yourself also. You are they.

In dreams the strength of man is increased. A thing that has never been measured is the extent of hope. Which of these two outstretched hands seems the more strange and which of these two chimeras is the more unheard of: the emperor from his throne in the Tuileries seizing Moscow, or Mallet from the depths of a prison seizing the emperor?

The impracticable calls forth to the inaccessible: 'Tis there that we would go; the Jungfrau is the only wife that will suffice us. We would bite upon red-hot iron, tho far from being Thrasybulus, John Huss, or Christopher Columbus. The crowd of the ambitious and dreamers content themselves with forbidden fruit. But to grit the teeth upon red-hot iron—what pleasure for the great of heart! *Vitam impendere vero.* Besides, there are recompenses. We seek Cathay, we find America.

As for catastrophes, they please us. One envies the aerolite. Whence fallest thou, O fragment of the unknown? Who has created thee? Who has branded thee? What is thy secret? Whither goest thou? To fall from on high, what an admirable fate! You were but a stone, you are a prodigy. To be flung from the zenith,—this is glory. Falls from heaven give an appetite to audacity; Phaeton is encouragement, and if Icarus had not existed Pilate des Roziers would have invented him.

Observe the great explorers. For what coasts do they most willingly embark? For Africa. Africa, what a prodigious dream! The sources of the Nile, Lake Nagaïn, the mountains of the Moon, the Great Desert, Darfour, Dahomey, tigers, lions, serpents, mammons, monsters, the skeleton of Carthage in the foreground, the fantom of Tombouctou in the interior, *Africa Portentosa.* This dream lures men, one after another. All die there, but all go there. To go whither no one ever returned, what temptation! what

excitement! These curiosities of the abyss are one of the elements of progress. Bold spirits have always had them. Prudence dissuades the thinker but he mistrusts the cowardice which is part of prudence. The Greeks vainly created a Minerva Aptera destined to rule Athens through her wingless wisdom: that did not prevent Socrates, ignoring the fatal arm which held out to him the hemlock in the shadow, from dreaming of the unknown God. Dreams, dreams, dreams. Some great, some small. The habitation of the dream depends upon the will of man. Empyrean, elysium, eden, the open portico resting upon dreamed of stars, images of light upon entablatures of azure, the supernatural, the superhuman—such are the desired imaginings. Man is at home in the clouds. He finds it quite simple to go and to come in the blue, to have under his feet the constellations. He quietly takes down and handles one after the other all the purples of the ideal and chooses his garments in this sacristy. To be of lowly station detracts nothing from

the boldness of the dream. The ass's skin would be a sun-robe.

For the rest, ideals differ. The ideal may be an imbecile one. There are creatures made to dream of a paradise of cabbage-soup. Your ideal is nothing else than your sense of proportion.

No, no one is outside the pale of the dream. Hence its immensity. Whoever we are, we have this ceiling above our heads. This ceiling is made of everything, of thatch, of plaster, of marble, of smoke, of garbage, of trees, of stars. It is through this ceiling, the dream, that we see this reality, the infinite. According to its greater or less height, it makes us think of good or evil. But let no one be deceived; there is no fatality here; its pressure upon us depends upon ourselves, for it is we who create it. To the vile soul a vile heaven. As we make our life we make our dream. Our conscience is the architect of our dream.

The grand dream is called duty. It is also the grand truth.

Nearly all mankind, somewhat like

Molière's bourgeois Jourdain, dream without knowing it. The broker scarcely doubts that he is a discounter of dreams. His note-book full of figures is a register of fantasmagoria; the financial report is a conjuror's book quite equal to Etteila; the great Albert could be a frequenter of the green-room, and the women who gamble at the Bourse are the same who play at cards. Go and see them of an evening; their memorandum received, they make an event of it. To hang on the news of the day, to pin one's fate upon the electric wire, to make one's self the jumping-jack of a rise or fall in stocks, is to be in full career of somnambulism; to know whether one shall be in opulence or indigence to-morrow, to read the Moniteur or consult the *dame de pique*—it is all one.

No living being but has his compartment in the *Casier* of imagination. No brain but may be labeled with some dream; this one ambition, that one wealth, that one glory, that one pleasure, that one vanity, all happiness. The continuous good dinner is a dream that the pocketbook re-

fuses to the poor, and the stomach to the rich. Venus forever makes a bad fist of the vertebral column. The naughty wings of Cupid are the makers of cripples; look at Henri Heine. Both hands stretched forth, no prize grasped.

Hope conforming to intellect, the form of the dreamed-of happiness, varies. For the usurer it is a good false scales; for the hunter it is a well-arranged wolf-trap, for the swearer-in of oaths it is a naïf auditory. The envious man lives in hope, the Eldorado of another's misfortune. And, I insist, realization matters little or nothing. Were you the very advocate or lawyer, you should not cheat the law which is this: the days of man are a series of prey unleashed for the shadows. The religions from the height of their thrones arraign one another for their false paradises. Thou ravest, Brahma! Thou liest, Mahomet! Thou cheatest souls, Luther! Crowd of brains, rout of chimeras.

The philosopher looks with a smile upon these dreamers, all inhabiting a vi-

sion: the player in his martingale, the miser in his endless piles of gold, the soldier in his cross of honor, the old maid in a husband, the thaumaturgist in his miracle, the priest in the tiara, the scientist in a crucible, the unlearned in superstition.

And where art thou thyself, philosopher? in Utopia.

Since it is given to no one whatsoever to escape the dream, let us accept it. Only let us try to have the right one. Men hate, are brutes, fight, lie; consider the first civilization that occurs, whether ancient or modern, consider any age whatever, your own or some other, and you see nothing but impostors, fighters, conquerors, robbers, murderers, executioners, wicked men, hypocrites; all this is somnambulism. Leave to this blood-stained host their fury and their gluttony. Leave to the violent and to the forces of blindness their hurricane fury. The tempest of human passion—how pitiful! Simulacra pursuing chimeras!

Leave their dream unto the shadows. But share you your bread with little chil-

dren, see that no one goes about you with naked feet, look kindly upon mothers nursing their children on the doorstep of humble cottages, walk through the world without malevolence, do not knowingly crush the humblest flower, respect the nests of birds, bow to the purple from afar and to the poor at close range. Rise to labor, go to rest with prayer, go to sleep in the unknown, having for your pillow the infinite; love, believe, hope, live, be like him who has a watering pot in his hand, only let your watering pot be filled with good deeds and good words; never be discouraged, be magi and be father, and if you have lands cultivate them, and if you have sons rear them, and if you have enemies bless them,—all with that sweet and unobtrusive authority that comes to the soul in patient expectation of the eternal dawn.

Utility of the Beautiful

MAN has the sentiment of beauty by gift of nature or as the result of educational development. Suppose him in presence of a masterpiece, even one of those masterpieces which are seemingly without use—that is to say, made without direct concern for humanity, justice or honor, devoid of all preoccupation for thought or fact, without other aim than beauty; it may be a statue, a painting, a symphony, a building, a poem. To all appearance it has no use; what good is a Venus? what good is a church spire? what good is an ode on spring or dawn? Place this man before this masterpiece. What takes place in him? Beauty is there. The man looks, the man listens; in a little while he does more than look, he sees; he does more than listen, he hears; the mystery of art begins to work; this whole work of art is a mouth of vital heat; the man feels himself dilate. The glimmer

of the absolute, so prodigiously distant, sends its ray through this thing,—sacred and almost formidable light by reason of its purity. The man becomes more and more absorbed in this work; he finds it beautiful; he feels it penetrating him. Beauty is true in its own right. The man submitted to the influence of the masterpiece trembles, and his heart resembles that of a bird which, under fascination, increases the beating of its wings.

To call a work beautiful is to call it sublime. One grows dizzy at sight of this unfolded miracle. The double deeps of beauty are innumerable. Tho a man put to the proof of admiration may not give a clear account of himself, that religion which issues from all perfection, the amount of revelation which resides in the beautiful, the eternal affirmed by the immortal, the rapture-giving proof of man's triumph in art, the magnificent spectacle of a human creation fronting the divine creation, unheard-of emulation with nature, the audacity of this thing to be a masterpiece beside the sun, the in-

effable fusion of all the elements of art, line, sound, color, idea, in a sort of sacred rythm, in accord with the harmonious mystery of heaven—all these phenomena press upon him obscurely and, unknown to himself, accomplish in him one knows not what of perturbation. Fecund perturbation. An inexpressible inundation of beauty enters into him at every pore.

He explores and makes soundings in the work; he declares to himself that it is a triumph for the intelligence to comprehend that, and that all perhaps are not capable or worthy of it; there is distinction in admiration, a species of ameliorating pride possesses him; he feels himself of the elect; it seems to him that this poem has chosen him. He is obsessed by the masterpiece. By degrees, slowly, accordingly as he contemplates or reads, rung by rung, ever mounting, he witnesses, thunderstruck, his own interior growth; he sees, he comprehends, he accepts, he dreams, he thinks, he melts, he wills. He shuts his eyes the better to see, he meditates upon what he has been con-

templating, he is absorbed in intuition, when all at once, clear-cut, bright, incontestable, triumphant, untroubled, mistless, cloudless, in the depths of the dark chambers of his mind appears the dazzling solar vision of the ideal; and behold, this man has another heart.

Something in him rights itself and something relaxes; contemplation has become fascination, meditation has become pity. This soul seems to have renewed its provision of the infinite. He feels better. He overflows with mercy and gentleness. Were he a judge he would pardon, were he a priest he would extinquish hell-fire. The unconscious masterpiece has given the man all sorts of serious and sweet counsel. A mysterious impulse toward good has come to him from this block of stone, from this melody which resembles the linnet's song, from this strophe which is nothing else than flowers and dew. Goodness has welled forth from beauty. There exist these strange elemental effects relating to the intercommunication of the deeps.

Lady Montague, after having seen at the Trippenhaus of Amsterdam the Amalthée of Jordaëns, cried: *I wish I had a poor man here to empty my purse into his hands!*

To be great and useless, that can not be. Art, in questions of progress and civilization, would maintain an impossible neutrality. Humanity can not be in travail without being aided by its main power, thought. Art contains the idea of liberty, *liberal arts;* literature contains the idea of humanity, *humaniores litteræ.* Human and earthly amelioration is a resultant of art, unconscious at times, more often conscious. Manners are softened, hearts are drawn together, arms embrace, the strong succor one another, compassion is born, sympathy breaks forth, brotherhood is revealed: because we read, because we think, because we admire. Beauty enters our eyes, a ray, and issues forth, a tear. To love is at the summit of all.

Art moves. Hence its civilizing power. The moved are the good the moved are

the great. Every martyr has been moved; it is by emotion that he has become impassible. Great constancies come of tears. The hero dreams of his country, and his eyes moisten. Cato began by pitying.

Let us insist upon the truth, ignored and amazing: art, on the sole condition of being faithful to its law, beauty, civilizes mankind by its own power, even without intending it, even in spite of its intention.

Certainly, if ever an intelligence, in the midst of earthly wretchedness, facing catastrophes and crimes, in presence of all those things that we call right, honor, truth, devotion, duty, represented the absolute will of indifference, it is Horace. That vast rage of Juneval directed against evil, that foam of the lion of justice—seek it in Horace; you shall find a smile. Horace is neutrality; at least he desires to be that. A soul desiring to be a eunuch, what terrible cold! If he has any faith, it is contrary to progress. He is implacable indifferentism. Satiety, such is the substance of his serenity.

Horace has a good digestion. He has the overwhelming contentment of the feeder. He has dined well with Mecænas, ask no more of him; or he has just taken a hand at tennis with Vergil, blear-eyed like himself.

One is extremely amused. As for the present or the past, as for *fas* and *nefas,* as for good and evil, as for falsehood or truth, they do not concern him. His philosophy is limited to good humored acceptance of fact, no matter what. Iniquity that gives good dinners is his friend; he is the born table companion of successful crime. What, take public infamy seriously; go to! That would give a neutral tint to the style which must remain transparent; his hexameter, so free before prosody, is a slave before Cæsar; that dance is performed on his belly. His epistles have that surface wisdom which La Fontaine had later: "The sage speaks according to his time: Long live the king! long live the League." His satires keep no surveillance over laws or manners; the frightful permanent spec-

tacle of the Esquiliæ obtain from him, in passing, a careless verse. His odes mention the gods, give an almost machine-like echo of the Greek sacerdotal ode, and put Jupiter and Cæsar in equilibrium; and as for love, the *puer* whom they voluntarily address is brother to Anacreon's Bathyllus and Vergil's Corydon. Add momentarily a wholly crude obscenity.

Such is the poet. What is the man? a poltroon who has thrown away his shield in battle, a sophist of the appetites, having a single aim, pleasure, a doubter believing only in the possession of the moment, a son of the people domesticated in the home of the Tyrant, a wag on the very morrow of the dead republic, a Roman who has behind him Rome slain by Octavius, and who does not even turn his head to look upon the august corpse of his mother. Here we have Horace.

Very well, read him. This skeptic will put you on solid ground, this coward will fire you, this corrupt man will heal you; and from the reading of this man who is not good, you will come forth better.

Why? Because he is Horace, he is beauty.

And because through evil which is at the surface, beauty which is the substance, acts.

Forma, beauty. Beauty is form. Strange and unexpected proof that form is substance. To confound form with surface is absurd. Form is essential and absolute; it comes from the very womb of the idea. It is beauty; and everything that is beauty manifests truth.

The emotion of reading Horace is exquisite. It is an enjoyment wholly literary, and strangely profound. One becomes absorbed in this rare language; each detail has a savor of its own. Unfortunately, a considerable amount of good sense is reconcilable with moral abasement; all this good sense is in Horace. Within the four walls of the accomplished fact how justly he reasons! It is right here, however, that one learns to distinguish justness from justice. For the rest, he is not good as we have just said, tho he is

not bad. To be bad requires an effort; Horace never makes an effort.

His style is set between the reader and himself, first like a veil, then like brightness, then like another kind of form which is no longer Horace, which is beauty. A certain vanishing of Horace takes place. The hateful side is veiled by the lovable side. Attenuated turpitude becomes trival. *Nescio quid meditans nugarum.* This loose philosophy in this supple style is pleasant to look at as it floats like the loosened cincture of Venus; no need of raising the voice against this enchantment. This Phryne verse shows its throat and there are no longer judges, but conquered men. Is this victory of style over the reader unhealthy? Far from it. Literary ecstasy is essentially honest. It is impossible to take it in bad part or to find evil in it. In all true poetry there is unveiled a certain chastity. Little by little Horace's good sense loses the bad odor of its origin, this pure style filters it and one feels only the ascendency of reason. Horace is limpid and clear.

The reader is overjoyed to see so clearly into a mind through the density of two thousand years. Horace is a compound of reason that can be divine, and of sensuality that can be bestial; this compound, a species of mixt being, very human withal, discusses in the epistle, laughs in the satire, sings in the ode, condenses in the verse, produces one knows not what light, and is transfigured in wisdom.

It is the wisdom of the bird. To eat, to drink, to sleep, to warble at daybreak, to build the nest and make love. This wisdom, which, before being that of Horace, was that of Solomon, becomes good in this poetry, so full of health this poetry is. In this poetry there is perfume, there is a kiss, there is radiance.

All the revolts against pedantry are there: prosody dislocated, cæsura disdained, words cut in two; but in this license, what science! That hemistich is a joy and one cries out at it. Contact with this fine, strong verse is a whole education for thought; it is a delight to han-

dle these hexameters with their luminous spirit fingers; one becomes more delicate in touching this divine style; and the most barbarous come from it civilized. Louis XVIII., relatively a philosopher, said: "It was Horace who made me a liberal."

One ponders over these infinite resources of lightness and strength. The familiar verse wheels round, preens itself, jumps about, goes, comes, pecks at itself, and has but one care: to be beautiful. What more charming than a sparrow wholly given up to preening its feathers? Horace arrives at that omnipotence which resides in the grace of children; he imposes upon us with indolence and insolence; he has the full liberty of gracefulness; there is in him the despotism of elegance.

He is the mocker who at will becomes lyrist; and when it pleases him to be lyric, he becomes—such an adventure actually befalls him—almost great. That particular ode is a triumph. The odes of Horace make us dream vaguely of vases of alabaster. That strophe seems borne by a

pair of white arms over a luminous head. In like manner certain verses of the Bible seem to issue from a fountain.

Such is Horace. Others have more august gifts, the terrible flame, the thunderbolt, virtue proud and brooding, revolt against wickedness, sublime wrath, all the swords that may be drawn from that scabbard indignation, great spaces, great flights, a reverberation of Cocytus or the Apocalypse; Horace reigns by serene charm. He has what one may call the whiteness of style.

Marvelous thing, and herein are the increasingly astonishing results of contemplating art: one may affirm that the ideas in Horace, that which we call substance is but surface, and that real substance is form, that eternal form which in the unfathomable mystery of beauty is bound up in the absolute.

Would you have another example? Take Vergil.

What more miserable idea can there be

than this: Octavius-Augustus received among the stars, and the stars arranging themselves to make a place for him. Was ever flattery more abject? This is the idea, this is the substance, is it not? And it is a flat and sorry thing. Here is the form:

"Tuque adeo, quem mox quae sint habitura deorum
Concilia incertum est; urbesne invisere, Cæsar,
Terrarumque velis curam et te maximus orbis.
Auctorem frugum tempestatumque potentem
Accipiat, cingens materna tempora myrto;
An deus immensi venias maris, ac tua nautae
Numina sola colant, tibi serviat ultima Thule,
Teque sibi generum Tethys emat omnibus undis;
Anne novum tardis sidus te mensibus addas,
Qua locus Erigonen inter Chelasque sequentes
Panditur: ipsi tibi jam brachia contrahit ardens
Scorpius, et cœli justa plus parte relinquit;
Quidquid eris (nam to nec sperent Tartara regem,
Nec tibi regnandi veniat tam dira cupido,
Quamvis Elysios miretur Græcia campos,
Nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrom),
Da facilem cursum, atque audacibus annue cœptis,
Ignarosque viæ mecum miseratus agrestes,
Ingredere, et votis jam nunc assuesce vocari."

I read these verses, I surrender to this form, and what is its immediate result? I forget Augustus, I even forget Vergil;

the base tyrant and the base singer are blotted out; like Horace, a moment ago, the poet is eclipsed by his poetry; I come upon a vision; the prodigious heavens open above me, I plunge into them, I float upon them, I precipitate myself into them, I behold the region of the incorruptible and the inaccessible, the splendrous immanence, the mysterious stars, the Milky Way, the zodiac leading each month to the zenith, an archipelago of stars, the scorpion contracting its enormous arms, the profound, the azure; and while as regards the idea, that which you call the substance, I was in the region of the small, because of style, because of what you call form, behold me in the immensities.

What do you think of your distinction between form and substance?

In this man there are two men, a courtier and a poet; the poet, slave of the courtier, alas! like the soul of the beast in the human machine. The courtier has had a base idea, he has confided it to the poet; the eagle with an earth-worm in its beak

soars none the less to the sun, and out of the low idea the poet has produced a sublime page.

O involuntary sanctity of art! splendor proper to the soul of man! beauty of the beautiful!

All the developments that we assign to truth converge, and we are here led to an observation already made with respect to Horace: there is in this sublime page surface and substance; the surface is what you name the primary idea, it is the courtier's homage to Augustus; the substance is the form. By virtue of the grand style, the surface, flattery of the master, the unclean husk of the sublime, breaks and opens, and through the rent appear the starry deeps of art, eternal beauty.

The ideal and beauty are identical; the ideal corresponds to the idea, and beauty to form; hence idea and substance are cognate.

Here we have arrived, logic permitting, at a somewhat dangerous truth: art civilizes by its own power. The work of art sharing in the universal influence of

beauty possesses at need a power independent of the will of the artist, the virtue of art shining forth even through the vice of the artist. La Fontaine, immoral, civilizes; Horace, impure, civilizes; Aristophanes, unjust and a cynic, civilizes.

In reality, if one would mount, for a view of art, to that height whereon the whole is summed up and distinctions, like the lesser hills, suffer effacement—in reality there is neither substance nor form. There is, and this includes everything, the powerful gushing forth of thought bearing expression along with it, the casting of the whole mass, bronze in the furnace, statue in the mold, the immediate and sovereign eruption of the idea armed with style. The expression issues forth like the idea, by authority; no less essential than the idea, it has with the latter a mysterious encounter in the shadows; the idea becomes incarnate, the expression is idealized, and both become so interpenetrated with each other that their union becomes permanent. Idea is style; style is idea. Try to tear out the word, it is the

thought that you destroy. For thought, expression is what it needs must be, a garment of light for this spiritual body. Genius, in this august lying-in, which is inspiration, thinks the word and the idea simultaneously. Hence those profound meanings inherent in the word; hence what is called the word of genius.

It is an error to think that an idea can be rendered in many different ways. While strongly upholding, be it well understood, the sovereign poets' magnificent right with regard to development, that high faculty pertaining to the dweller of the summits of placing in light around the central thought all the surrounding ideas—while strongly upholding this faculty and this right, which are of the very essence of poetry, we affirm this: an idea has but one expression. It is this expression that genius finds. How does it find it? from on high. By inspiration. Sometimes without knowing how, but always with certainty. The eagle's instinct.

For him as creator, the idea with the expression, the substance with the form

constitutes unity. The idea without the word would be an abstraction; the word without the idea would be a sound; their union is their life. The poet can not conceive them distinct. Alpheus idea, and Arethusa expression; the yellow Arve and the blue Rhone flowing side by side through whole regions without mingling; no, assuredly there is nothing like this. In the miracle of the idea-made style there are not two phenomena, not something resembling the embrace of twins, as intimate as may be. No, it is the fusion in which the font has not left a vein, it is a mingling in its highest sense, it is amalgamation to the point when one no longer recognizes the other; it is intimacy become identity.

Those who attempt to undo thread by thread this divine torsion, the vivisectionists of criticism, do not even get the satisfaction that the dissecting table gives to the anatomist: in which the entrails are here, the brain there, gouts of blood further off, a head in a basket; on one side substance, on the other form. No. If

they are in good faith and have the grand critical sense, they arrive all at once at the invisible, the indissoluble, the congenial, the absolute. They say: substance and form are the same fact of life.

The beautiful is one.

The beautiful is soul.

Great Men

I

The Jubilee of Shakespeare—April, 1864

In the end the tomb is always in the right. Very recently an opportunity offered to pronounce the final verdict upon Shakespeare and to liquidate the past: the glorious date of the poet's birth at Stratford, April 23, has returned for the three hundredth time.

At the end of three hundred years mankind has something to say concerning this long-neglected genius. It has seemed as if Shakespeare presented himself at the threshold of France; Paris arose, poets, artists, historians have stretched a hand toward this fantom in whom poets perceived Hamlet, artists Prospero, and historians Julius Cæsar; the drunken savage, the barbarous harlequin, "Will" Shakespeare appeared, and men saw nothing but light; the scoffing of two

centuries culminated in transfiguration; France said: Welcome, O genius! Glory has taken flesh.

One felt in the shadows something resembling the adhesion of our august dead; we seemed to see Molière smile, we seemed to see Corneille give salutation. Of ancient hatreds, ancient injustice, there remains nothing; not a protest, not a murmur,—unanimous enthusiasm; and, at this hour, the definitive appraisers of the reality of things, those who match their aversion for despots by their love for the things of the intellect, those who, desiring that justice should be done, desire also to render justice; contemplators, solitary thinkers occupied with the ideal, the dreamers, are moved with wonder at the appeasement of passion which has marked this majestic advent.

Is Shakespeare, then, a drunken savage? Savage, yes, in so far as he inhabits a virgin forest. Drunk? yes, he is the quaffer of the ideal. He is a giant walking beneath mighty-branching trees. Behold him lifting on high the great golden

cup, his eyes flaming with that light that he drinks. Shakespeare, like Æschylus, like Job, like Isaiah, is one of those omnipotent beings of thought and poetry who, on equal terms, so to speak, with the mysterious All, have the sublimity of the creation itself, and who, like the creation, translate into outward expression that sublimity in profuse forms and images, lavishing shadows, flowers, leaves and living streams.

These men have originality—that is to say, the mighty gift of personal initiative. Hence their omnipotence.

Vergil starts from Homer; observe the gradual diminution crossed with reflections: Racine starts from Vergil, Voltaire starts from Racine, Chénier (Marie Joseph) starts from Voltaire, Luce de Lancival starts form Chénier, Zero starts from Luce de Lancival. From moon to moon we arrive at effacement. This decreasing progression is the most dangerous of gearing. He who becomes entangled in it is lost. No mill produces such flatness.

Example: look at Hector at his starting point in Homer, and see him arrived at his destination in Luce de Lancival.

This decreasing progression has been called, in France, the classic school.

Hence a literature in pale colors.

Toward 1804 poetry coughs.

At the commencement of this century, under the empire which ended at Waterloo, this literature had said its last word. At this epoch it has arrived at perfection. Our fathers saw its apogee—that is to say, its agony.

Original minds, poets of direct and immediate inspiration, never have this chlorosis. The sickly pallor of imitation is unknown to them. They have not in their veins the poetry of another. Their blood is their own. For them production is a phase of life. They create because they exist. They respire, and behold—a masterpiece.

The identity of their style with themselves is complete. For the true critic, who is a chemist, their total is condensed in the least detail. That word is Æschy-

lus, that word is Juvenal, that word is Dante. *Unsex*—all of Lady Macbeth is in this word, distinctive of Shakespeare. There is not an idea in the poet but what is rooted in him like the leaf in the tree. One does not see the origin; it is beneath the ground, but it is there.

The idea issues from the brain exprest—that is to say, amalgamated with the word, analyzable but concrete, a mixture of the age and the poet, simple in appearance, in reality composite. Issuing thus from the profound source, each idea of the poet, one with the word, sums up in its microcosm all the elements of the poet. One drop equals the mass of water. So that each detail of style, each term, each vowel, each acceptation, each construction, each turn of expression, often the very punctuation, is metaphysical.

The word, as we have said elsewhere, is the flesh of the idea, but this flesh is alive. If like the old school of criticism, which separated the substance from the form, you separate the word from the idea, you bring about death. As in death,

the idea—that is to say, the soul—disappears. Your war on the word is an attack on the idea. Indivisible style characterizes the supreme writer. A writer like Tacitus, a poet like Shakespeare, puts his whole organism, intuition, passion, power of suffering, illusions, destiny, being, into each line of his book, into each sigh of his poem, into each cry of his drama. The imperious determination of conscience and one knows not what of the absolute that resembles duty are manifest in the style. To write is to do; the writer performs a deed. The idea exprest is responsibility accepted. This is why the writer is bound up in the style. He leaves nothing to chance. Responsibility implies solidarity.

Detail adjusts itself to the whole, and is itself a whole. Everything is comprehensive. That word is a tear, that word is a flower, that word is a lightning flash, that word is ordure. And the tear burns, and the flower dreams, and the lightning laughs, and the ordure illumines. Sublimity embraces the dunghill; a whole poem proves it: Job.

Masterpieces are mysterious formations; the infinite is secreted here and there; some impression which astonishes you is at the heart of all these human emotions, all these real palpitations, all this living pathos, a sudden flower-burst of the unknown. Style has something of the preexistent. It is always of its own species. It issues from the whole writer, from his hair-roots as from the depths of his intellect. The whole genius, his earthly side as well as his cosmic side, his humanity as well as his divinity, poet as well as prophet, are in the style. Style is soul and blood; it proceeds from those profound deeps in man where the organism loves; style is the entrails.

It is incontestably fatal, and at the same time nothing is more free. Hence the prodigy. No chains, no constraint, no frontier. It is impossible to keep from smiling when one hears, for example, of the difficulties of rhyme; why not difficulties of syntax as well? These alleged difficulties are the necessary forms of language, whether in verse or prose, self-en-

gendered and without previous combination. They have their analogues in external facts; the echo is nature's rhyme.

We are acquainted with a poet who never in his life opened Richelet, who, as a child, composed verses, at first without form, then less and less inexact, and finally correct, who found step by step and alone all the laws, cesura, alternate feminine rhymes, etc., and from whom prosody came ready made and by instinct.

Style has a chain, idiosyncrasy, that umbilical cord of which we spoke a moment ago, which binds it to the writer. With the exception of this bond which is its source of life, it is free. It traverses in full freedom the alembics of grammar; it is essential; its principle, which is the writer himself, is incorporated in him, and it loses not an atom in all the filtering processes whence it issues, phrase for prose or verse for poetry.

In the very heart of the general rhythm which it accepts, it has a rhythm of its own which it imposes. Hence an absolute point of view, that amazing elasticity of

style, all-embracing, and ranging from the subtle chaste to the sublime obscene, from Petrarch to Rabelais.

Sometimes Petrarch and Rabelais are in the same man, the gamut of style extends from Romeo to Falstaff; meanwhile the world holds men, angels, fairies; the grave appears, at one end its maker, at the other its dweller—the gravedigger and the specter; night, in cynic mood, shows something other than its face, *buttock of the night*[1]; the witches loom, that canaille Eumenides, those caricatures drawn on the vague wall of dreams by a charcoal from hell: while, brooding upon this world created by his will, contemplating the result of his premeditation, the mighty poet gazes, listens, augments, weeps, sneers, loves, and dreams.

Shakespeare, like Æschylus, has the prodigality of the unfathomable. The unfathomable, that is the inexhaustible. The more profound the thought, the more vivid the expression. The color issues

[1] In English in the original.

from the darkness. The life of the abyss is an unheard-of thing; the central fire makes the volcano, the volcano produces the lava, the lava engenders oxide, the oxide fecundates the root, the root creates the flower; thus the rose comes from the flame. In likewise the image comes from the idea. The travail of the abyss takes place in the brain of genius. The idea, an abstraction in the poet, becomes full flower and reality in the poem. What shadow in the heart of the earth! What swarming on the surface! Without this shadow you should not have this swarming. This vegetation of images and forms is rooted in all the mysteries. These flowers attest the deeps.

Shakespeare, like all poets of this order, has an absolute personality. He has a fashion of his own of imagining, a fashion of his own of creating, a fashion of his own of producing. Imagination, creation, production, three concentric amalgamated phenomena of genius. Genius is the sphere of this radiance. Imagination invents, creation organizes, produc-

tion realizes. Production is the entrance of matter into the idea, giving it body, rendering it palpable and visible, endowing it with form, sound and color, supplying it with a mouth for speaking, feet for walking and wings for flying; in a word, making the idea external to the poet without its ceasing to be inherent in him through idiosyncrasy, that umbilical cord which unites creation to creator.

In all the great poets the phenomenon of inspiration is the same; nevertheless diversity in the cerebral equipment varies it infinitely.

The idea issues from the brain: conception; the idea becomes a type: gestation; the type becomes man: childbirth; man becomes passion and action: achievement.

The idea in the type, the type in the man, the man in the action; such in Shakespeare, as in Æschylus, as in Plautus, as in Cervantes, is the phenomenon which is summed up in this concretion: life in the drama.

In the masterpiece all is willed. Shakespeare wills his subject, this particular one

and no other. Shakespeare wills his development, Shakespeare wills his characters, Shakespeare wills his passions, Shakespeare wills his philosophy, Shakespeare wills his action, Shakespeare wills his style, Shakespeare wills his humanity. He creates in the likeness of humanity—and himself. Seen in full face he is Man; in profile, he is Shakespeare. Change the name; substitute Aristophanes, Molière, Beaumarchais, the formula holds true.

II

La Fontaine

La Fontaine lived the contemplative and visionary life up to the point of forgetting himself and losing himself in the grand whole. One might almost say that he vegetated rather than lived. There he is in the copse, his feet in the moss, his head among the leaves, his mind wrapt in mystery, absorbed in the existing ensemble, identified with the solitudes. He dreams, he gazes, he listens, he examines a

bird's nest, he studies a blade of grass, he spies on the mole at work, he understands the unknown language of the wolf, the fox, the weasel, the ant, the gnat. He no longer exists for himself; he has no consciousness that he is a being apart, his ego is effaced. He was there this morning, he will be there this evening, like yonder ash or birch tree. A cloud passes, he does not see it; it showers, he does not feel it. His feet have taken root among the roots of the forest; through them the mighty and universal sap circulates and mounts to his brain, and there almost unknown to him, becomes thought just as it becomes an acorn on the oak tree and a mulberry on the vine. He feels it mounting; he feels that he is living this great, strong life where all are equal; he enters into communication with nature; he is in equilibrium with the whole creation. And what does he do? He works. He labors as all creation does at the direct work of God. He puts forth flower and fruit, fable and moral, poetry and philosophy; strange poetry composed of all the feelings that na-

ture awakens in the dreamer; strange philosophy, which issues forth from things to enter into man.

La Fontaine is one tree the more in the forest, the *fablier*.

III

Voltaire

VOLTAIRE is not exactly a great poet; nor is he a great philosopher. He is a great representative of both.

Voltaire, in his time, performed the functions of all the tribunes and of the whole press of ours. He was the perpetual journalist, advocate and deputy of his age. His greatness consists in his having been the magazine of ideas of a whole century.

Whenever a man is equipped with an intellect of such quality that there come to him, as to a reservoir or fountain, all his contemporaries, great and small, princes and blackguards, one with his amphora, another with his pitcher, another with his

pan, each with whatever wits he may have—that man is great. Criticize, analyze, blame, rail at your ease; insult him and declare that it is but a muddy and impure wine wherewith he has filled all these vessels, all these heads: no matter, this man is great. You may be right about him as to details, but he is bound to be right on the whole.

IV

Beaumarchais

One of the things that charm and astonish me most in Beaumarchais is the fact that his genius, tho lavish of immodesty, has preserved such a large store of grace. For myself, I avow that he pleases me more by his grace than by his immodesty, altho this immodesty, commingled with the braveries of a dawning revolution, sometimes resembles the masterful and formidable effrontery of genius. From the historical viewpoint Beaumarchais is a cynic like Mirabeau; from the

literary viewpoint he is a cynic like Aristophanes.

But, I repeat, whatever there may be of power and even of beauty in the immodesty of Beaumarchais, I prefer his grace. In other words, I admire Figaro but I love Suzanne.

And first of all, Suzanne: what a sprightly name! what a treasure-trove of a name! what a well-chosen name! I have always felt particularly grateful to Beaumarchais for having invented this name. And I use the word, *invented,* advisedly. It has not been sufficiently remarked how the poet of genius has the secret of giving his creations names which resemble and suggest them. A name should be a character. The poet who does not know that, knows nothing.

Suzanne then—Suzanne pleases me. Behold, how this name is capable of variation. It has three aspects: Suzanne, Suzette, Suzon.

Suzanne is a beauty with a throat like a swan, naked arms, gleaming teeth, a girl perhaps, perhaps a woman, one does

not know exactly; a little of the soubrette, a little of the mistress, a ravishing creature still pausing upon the threshold of life, now bold, now timid, who can make a count blush, or be made to blush by a page. Suzette is the arch darling who comes and goes, who dreams, who listens, who waits, who tosses her head like a bird, who unveils her thought as the flower unveils its calix, the fiancée with the white wimple, the ingénue overflowing with wit, the innocent girl full of curiosity. Suzon is a good child with open glance, a frank expression, a face of defiant loveliness, a beautiful uncovered throat, who fears no man, not even a young man, who is so gay that one divines she has suffered, who is so indifferent that one divines she has loved. Suzette has no lover, Suzanne has one, Suzon has two. Who knows? perhaps three. Suzette sighs, Suzanne smiles, Suzon has a ringing laugh. Suzette is charming, Suzanne is seducing, Suzon is appetizing. Suzette comes too near being an angel, Suzon comes too near being a devil; Suzanne is between the two.

How fine that is! How pretty it is! How profound it is! In this woman there are three women, and in these three women there is the whole of woman. Suzanne is more than a mere character, she is a trilogy.

When Beaumarchais the poet is desirous of calling forth one of the three ideas of his creation, he employs one of these three names, and accordingly as he calls her Suzette, Suzanne or Suzon, the beautiful girl whom the spectators have before their eyes changes on the instant under the wand of a magician, as if lit up by a sudden ray of light, and appears in the colors that the poet desires.

Such is the significance of a well chosen name.

Genius

You are in the country, it is raining, and it is necessary to kill time; you take up a book and set yourself to read this book as you would read the official newspaper of the prefecture, or the handbills of the country town, in distracted mood, thinking of something else, yawning slightly. All at once you feel yourself seized by something, your thoughts have ceased to belong to you, your distraction has vanished, a sort of absorption, almost subjection succeeds, you are no longer able to rise from your seat and leave the room. Someone holds you. Who is it? It is this book.

A book is someone. Do not doubt that.

A book is like the gearing of a machine. Have a care of these black lines on white paper; they are forces; they combine, compose, decompose, enter into one another, pivot upon one another, unwind, in-

terknit, embrace, act. That line bites, that line binds and grips, that line attracts, that line subdues. Ideas are like gearing. You feel yourself drawn by the book. It will not let go of you until it has given a certain shape to your mind. Sometimes readers come from the perusal of a book completely transformed. Homer and the Bible work these miracles. The proudest spirits, the finest, the most delicate, the simplest, the greatest, yield to this charm. Shakespeare was intoxicated by Belleforest. La Fontaine went about everywhere crying out: Have you read Baruch? Corneille, much greater than Lucan, is fascinated by Lucan. Dante is dazzled by Vergil, a lesser than himself.

With all of us, great books are irresistible. One may decline to be convinced by them, one may read the Koran without becoming a Mussulman, one may read the Vedas without becoming a Fakir, one may read Zadig without becoming a Voltairian, but one can not help admiring them. Therein is their power. *I salute you and*

fight you because you are a king, said a Greek to Xerxes.

We admire what is like ourselves. Admiration of the mediocre characterizes the envious. Admiration of great poets is the sign of great critics. To discover beyond all the horizons the heights of the absolute it is necessary that we ourselves be upon one of the heights.

What we say here is so true that it is impossible to admire a masterpiece without at the same time experiencing a certain self-esteem. We feel a pleasure in understanding it. There is in admiration a certain strength that dignifies and enlarges the intellect. Enthusiasm is a cordial. To comprehend is to approach. To open a good book, to be pleased with it, to plunge into it, to lose one's self in it, to believe in it—what a feast! One enjoys all the surprizes of the unexpected in the region of truth. Revelations of the ideal succeed one another blow upon blow.

What, then, is this thing that we know as beauty?

Do not define it, do not discuss it, do

not reason about it, do not split hairs, do not look for midday at two o'clock, do not become your own enemy by cowardly hesitation, coldness and vain scruple. What is uglier than a pedant? Go your ways, tell yourself that God is inexhaustible, that art is unlimited, that poetry is not contained in any art of poetry any more than the sea is contained in a vase or pitcher; be in all good faith an honest man sufficiently great to admire, yield yourself up to the poet, do not cavil at the cup for drunkenness—drink, accept, feel, understand, see, live, grow!

The lightning flash of the immensities, something that shines resplendent with the suddenness of the superhuman—such is genius. Certain supreme strokes of the wing. You take a book, you run your eyes over it: all of a sudden it seems as if the page were rent from top to bottom, like the veil of the temple. Through this rent appears the infinite. A strophe suffices, a verse suffices, a word suffices. The summit is attained. All is said. Read Ugolin, Françoise in the tempest, Achil-

les insulting Agamemnon, Prometheus Bound, the Seven Chiefs before Thebes, Hamlet in the graveyard, Job on his dunghill. Shut the book now. Dream. You have seen the stars.

There are certain mysterious men who can not be otherwise than great. The good-natured blockheads who constitute the great crowd and the small public, and whom we should guard against confounding with the people, bear a grudge against them on that account. The dwarfs condemn the colossus. His greatness is a crime. What right, indeed, has he to be great? to call himself Miguel Cervantes, François Rabelais, Pierre Corneille, and not an ordinary scribbler; to exist apart, to cast all this shadow and occupy all this space; that a mere mandarin, that a mere famous doctrinaire, a great personage forsooth, should decline to give way in your path! Such a thing ought not to be. It is unsupportable.

Why, in truth, are these men great? They do not know themselves. He who sent them knows. Their stature is a part of their function.

A formidable vision dwells upon their eyeballs, is concealed beneath their eyelids. They have seen the Ocean with Homer, the Caucasus with Æschylus, Pain with Job, Babylon with Jeremiah, Rome with Juvenal, Hell with Dante, Paradise with Milton, Man with Shakespeare, Pan with Lucretius, Jehovah with Isaiah. Inebriated with intuition and the dream, they have walked almost unconscious over the waters of the abyss and traversed the strange ways of the ideal, which has interpenetrated them forever. A glimmer of this light shines upon their foreheads, somber withal, like everything full of the unknown. They have upon their faces a pale sweat of light. The soul issues through their pores. What is this soul? God.

Filled as they are with this divine light, missionaries of civilization, prophets of progress, they open their hearts and shed a vast human brightness. This brightness is of the word, for the word is light.—*O God,* cried out Jerome in the desert, *I hear Thee as much with eyes as with ears!* In-

struction, counsel, moral support, hope—such are their gifts; then their gaping and bleeding side closes, the wound which had become a mouth and spoken closes its lips and becomes silent, and their wings now unfold.

No more pity, no more tears. Enchantment. Humanity is now left far behind them. To behold other horizons, to seek adventures in the depths of space, to make an excursion into the unknown, to enter upon discovery in the realm of the ideal—such is now their need. They go forth. What is the azure depths to them? what matters the darkness to them? They launch forth, they turn their formidable backs upon earthly things, they unfold their immense wings, they become a species of monsters—specters perhaps, perhaps archangels—and bury themselves in the terrible depths of the infinite to the mighty echoes of a flight of eagles.

Then they suddenly reappear. Behold them. They smile upon us and console us. They are men.

These apparitions and vanishings, these

departures and returns, these instantaneous occultations and sudden presences are felt rather than seen by the reader, who is by turns dazzled and blinded by the book. He is in the power of a poet, a disquieting sort of duress, he has a vague consciousness of the mighty movements of this genius; he feels that he is now far off, now near at hand; and these alternations which mean for the reader darkness or light evoke from him the words "I understand no longer.—I now understand."

When Dante, leaving Hell, mounts up to Paradise, the coldness experienced by readers is merely due to the increased distance between Dante and them. The comet has withdrawn to a distance. The heat has diminished. Dante has advanced higher, has progressed, is farther off from man, is nearer the absolute.

Schlegel, one day, while meditating upon all the forms of genius, propounded this question, which with him was but an outbreak of enthusiasm, but which with Fourier and Saint-Simon is the motto of

a whole system: *Are they really men—such men as these?*

Yes, they are men; it is their misfortune and their glory. They suffer hunger and thirst; they are subject to blood, climate, temperament, fever, woman, sufferings, pleasures; they have, like other men, inclinations, attractions, failures, satisfactions, passions, temptations; they are subject, like other men, to the flesh and its maladies and its attractions, which are also maladies. They have their animal side.

Matter weighs them down: they are subject to the law of gravitation. While their souls revolve round the absolute, their bodies revolve round want, appetite and sin. The flesh has its desires, its instincts, its covetousness, its claims to happiness; it is a sort of inferior personality which lives on its own account, has its own separate affairs, has its own ego, provides for its own caprices or necessities—sometimes like a robber and to the confusion of the soul which it despoils. It was Corneille's soul that created Cinna; it was the animal part of Corneille that

dedicated Cinna to the banker Montauron.

Among certain men of genius, infirmities, so far from being prejudicial to their greatness, but confirm their humanity. The radiance of an archangel is in the brain, while brutal night enwraps the eyeball. Homer is blind; Milton is blind. Camoëns blind of one eye, seems an insult. Beethoven deaf, is irony. Æsop, hunchbacked, is like some Voltaire for whom God made the soul and Fréron the body. Infirmity or deformity inflicted on these well-beloved and august ones of thought has the effect of a sinister contrast, hardly defensible on high, of a concession made to jealousy of which it would seem that the Creator ought to be ashamed. It must be with a certain envious triumph that matter from the bosom of the darkness beholds Tyrtæus and Byron brooding like genii and limping like men.

The French Revolution

THE Revolution is humanity's change of life. Say what you will about it: whether good or evil, the fact dominates you. It is the grand crisis of universal virility.

The Revolution is the knife with which Civilization cuts its bonds.

In the Revolution the whole world is victim and no one is culpable. Robespierre was the terrible proof-reader of the Revolution. He put upon it his *deleatur*. The mighty proof-sheets of progress reviewed by him still retain the dark glamour of his sinister eyeball.

Voltaire is the mine; Mirabeau is the explosion.

Revolutions, formidable liquidations of history; elemental creations of laws, codes, facts, manners, progress, prodigies; mighty movements of peoples and of ideas which mingle all men in the same jocund convulsion, which unleash electric freedom, which make the two worlds

tremble with the same trembling, which launch at a single flash two thunder shocks, one in Europe, the other in America; which, in overthrowing the monarchy in France, lay low tyranny throughout the universe; which enlighten, illumine, warm, burn, thunderstrike; which cause to issue from gigantic demolition the radiant future of the human race; which cause the birth of dawn in the sepulcher, couple amazing extremes, agonize and wail, curse and sing, hate and adore, resolve all in heroism, in joy and in love, send the old lock of despotism with all its gnashing of teeth to die a quiet death in the humble work-cabinet of Mount Vernon, and finally make of the key of the Bastille the paper-weight of Washington.

So be it. The Revolution's name is the Terror. Louis the Fifteenth's name is the Horror.

Not a cloud, the heavens are pure, the sun shines, the land is bathed in light;

they spread their sails, they sing, they abandon themselves gaily to the current of the stream; the river, magnificent and exhaustless, widens more and more; it is as large as a sea, it is as calm as a lake; it bears along islands of flowers, it mirrors the heavens in which there is not a shadow. Whither are they going? They do not know; but all is beautiful, superb and charming.

Afar off they hear before them in the depths of the unknown horizon a hoarse, deep sound.

Whither are they going? What matters it! They are going whither goes the river. They know well that they shall land somewhere. They proceed. They are intoxicated with the songs of birds, with the perfume of flowers that they see on all sides and that they pluck in passing, with the swift-flowing water, with the splendor of the heavens, with their own joy. The sounds on the horizon are drawing nearer; a few hours ago the breath of the wind stopt it; now it is heard steadily.

At certain moments the current lan-

guishes, when they resort to the oars to go more quickly. It is so delightful to travel swiftly. To pass like shadows before shadows—this appears to them the whole of life. They are so happy that they forget there is such a thing as night.

The noise is approaching nearer every moment; it resembles the rolling of a chariot. They begin to ask one another: What is this noise?

The river is full of turnings. Soon a corner of the heavens becomes clouded. Something that one would take for a wreath of smoke disengages itself from one part of the horizon and swells into a great cloud. This cloud which seems to rise from the earth is now at the right, now at the left. Has it changed its place, or is it the river which has a turn? They do not know, but they wonder. It is one more spectacle among so many spectacles.

The noise is now like thunder. It changes place with the cloud they are looking at. Where the cloud is, there is the noise.

They proceed onward, they sing, they

laugh; they are greatly expectant, but in this expectation there is nothing but hope. Among them are scholars, dreamers, thinkers, men rich with all sorts of riches, philosophers, sages.

Suddenly, heavens! the river gives a turn; the cloud is before them, the noise is before them; it is no longer the cloud, it is the whirlpool of twenty waterspouts tangled and twisted by the hurricane, it is the smoke of a volcano with a crater two leagues wide. The noise is frightful. Thunder resembles that noise as the barking of a dog resembles the roaring of a lion. The current is swift and furious, the surface of the river curves like an arc, inward toward the earth. What is it that lies a few paces before them? A gulf.

A gulf! they row backward, they would remount the stream. It is too late. That current is not to be remounted. Soon they perceive that the river is actually alive; that they have deceived themselves; that what they took for a river was a people; that what they took for waves were

men; they believed they were sailing over inert water that hardly foamed beneath the oar, and they were plowing through souls, profound, obscure, violent, bruised, tumultuous souls, full of hate and fury. It is too late! it is too late. The precipice is before them. These waves, this river, these men, these souls, this people, uprooted trees, centuried granite, rocks torn from the banks, gilt ships, flag-decked sloops, flower islands, all hurries on, wavers, strikes and intermingles,—all founders.

No one ever has seen, no one ever will see anything more grand and more terrible. A whole humanity instantly swallowed up on the same day, at the same hour, in the same abyss! A whole society, with its laws, its manners, its religion, its beliefs, its prejudices, its arts, its luxury, its past, its history, encountering the sun-blaze and foundering like a fisherman's bark! We have here one of those things willed by God. This prodigious ensemble of men, of facts and of events, this enormous mass come from afar and

with such calm, reaches the brink of the gulf, bows majestically and vanishes. This is no longer a river, nor a gulf, nor a people, nor a catastrophe; it is chaos. It is darkness, horror, tumult, foam, an eternal and lamentable groaning. All the hounds of the abyss howl in the darkness. Meanwhile the sun shines, truth is not discouraged but rays forth forever, and that frightful cloud full of clamor and storm serves but to make its rainbow more splendid.

Does anything survive that? Is not such calamity, such an earthquake, so monstrous a shipwreck the death of the people? Is it not the end of a continent?

No.

All has foundered, nothing is lost.

All is swallowed up, nothing has perished.

All is engulfed, nothing is dead.

All has disappeared, all will reappear.

Take a few steps farther, live a few years, look: behold the river larger, behold the people greater.

The formidable sound which warns

and which counsels is heard always; but it is no longer before us it is behind us. One hundred years ago it was heard in the future; to-day it is heard in the past.

And the generations in their onward march sometimes retrace their steps to see what that sound is; and the centuries bow their heads and dream upon this fall of a society and of a monarchy, upon this mighty cataract of civilization that we call the French Revolution.

February 17, 1844.

Things of the Infinite

I

"Souls pass through eternity to traverse immensity."

This thought was uttered by the Druids two thousand years ago. Had they already arrived at a sort of divination of the plurality of worlds? They lifted their eyes to contemplate the stars and dreamed this prodigious dream. Yet they knew nothing of these stars save what their unaided eyes saw. To-day we have slightly drawn aside the veil of Isis and our imagination can descry less obscurely, tho more fearfully, the dizzy path from world to world into infinity.

In the depths of this darkness, at a distance of two hundred million leagues, there is a globe. This globe is fifteen hundred times as large as the Earth, and to move the Earth there would be required ten billion sets of horses, each set consist-

ing of ten billion animals. This globe is Jupiter. We see it, it does not see us; our globe is too small. Jupiter is covered with clouds; our twilight is its full midday. It has a year as long as twelve of our years, a day of five hours, a night of five hours, a single season, its axis having hardly any inclination, and four satellites. At times all four of these satellites are on its horizon; when one is a crescent, the other is a full moon. The prodigious swiftness of its rotation uses up life quickly. The evolution of organisms is too precipitate, the repetition of vital acts too frequent, the friction of the machinery is too fatiguing, sleep is too short: they die early in Jupiter. From Jupiter and the surrounding regions the stars are visible by day.

One hundred and sixty million leagues farther off there is another enormous body. This is only eight hundred times larger than the Earth. This dweller of the darkness resembles a gem encircled with fire. The circle is double. The first circle, the great one, is seventy-one mil-

lion leagues in diameter; the second circle, the smaller, has a diameter of sixty million leagues. This monster is a world. We call it Saturn. Its swiftness of rotation is such that its poles have been flattened one-tenth of its diameter. For the inhabitants of Saturn's rings the year is equivalent to thirty of our years and is alternately night and day—that is to say, a day of thirty years is followed by a night of thirty years. A creature who had lived a day and a night on one of Saturn's rings would be an old man on our Earth. Saturn has eight moons. Here darkness keeps on thickening. The twilight of Jupiter is the full midday of Saturn. Saturn, revolving in livid space, fills with its globe, its rings and the eight orbits of its eight planets, two thousand six hundred billion square leagues.

Four hundred million leagues farther off is another globe. After the world of Saturn, the world of Uranus. Uranus, like Saturn, has eight moons. These eight, contrary to all known planets, revolve from east to west. The obscurity keeps

on increasing. While there is twenty-two times less light in Jupiter than on Earth, there is seventeen times less light in Uranus than in Jupiter. Uranus has a diameter of fourteen thousand leagues. Our century is its year.

Five hundred million leagues farther off is another globe, Oceanus. The darkness is becoming terrible. Oceanus has nine hundred times less light and heat than the Earth. Impossible to calculate this ice and this shadow. Double the size of the evening star and you will have the Sun as seen from Oceanus. Oceanus is thirty times farther than we are from the Sun. Now our distance from the Sun may be conceived from this: the section of a hair represents the diameter of the Earth seen from the Sun. Oceanus is one hundred times larger than the Earth. It has a single moon. Its year is equivalent to one hundred and sixty-four of our years; its seasons are forty years long. Oceanus describes round the star we call the Sun a circle of seven billion leagues.

Have we reached the end?

The end! What is the meaning of this word?

Increase the power of your telescope and you shall see!

Those amazing planets of the darkness stretching out beyond Oceanus, one after the other, in impossible depths of space—have you not dreamed of them? You shall have proof of them.

Moreover, of what importance are planets? Why lose time with them? Is there not something else? Besides the planet, a luminous moving point, is there not an immovable luminous point? There is the star.

Go thither.

Which is the nearest?

The star Alpha in Centaurus.

Let us journey to one.

If the hurricane of the Indies, which uproots forests and razes cities, doubled its speed-rate of a league a minute, it would require, at the rate of one hundred and twenty leagues an hour, thirty days to go from the Earth to the moon. Light comes from the moon in one second. It

would take light, which makes four million two hundred thousand leagues a minute, three years and eight months to reach us from the star Alpha in Centaurus. It would take twenty-two years to reach us from Sirius, our other neighbor.

Such are those precipices that we call space.

What is a star? It is a place of precipitation, into which the infinite unceasingly pours unknown combustible matter. This subtle matter falls from everywhere into this furnace, this crucible of energy.

So many stars, so many loves. These terrible attractions share among themselves the abyss.

Every center attracts. Once seized by these lovers, the worlds remain forever their prisoners.

Our star, the Sun, has taken Venus, Mercury, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Oceanus.

Each star is thus a sun. Around each star there is a creation. Our solar world with all its planets is imperceptible in the stellar world. Our sun, thirteen hun-

dred and sixty thousand times larger than the Earth, is but an atom-star.

Can we imagine rivers of planets? They exist. These rivers circle the star called the Sun. The most remarkable is the great current of stars situated half way between Mars and Jupiter. The first of these stars, Cerès, was discovered in January, 1801; the last, Alcmena, in November, 1864. Eighty-two of them have been discovered up to now. Their number is probably infinite.

These circular rivers of telescopic worlds are veritable rings, linked one to another and constituting an amazing cosmic chain of vast extent.

Another chain would be composed of the gigantic elliptical orbits of the comets.

Do you wish to calculate what this chain would be like?

The comet of 1680, one of the preoccupations of Newton, returns at the end of eight thousand eight hundred years; it plunges through thirty-two billion leagues of space. This ellipse, thirty-two billion leagues long, would be but a link in the cometary chain.

These prodigious threads bind the creations in immeasurable space.

Most of the comets seem to be, and probably are, fiery clouds of cosmic matter. Some, however, evidently have a solid nucleus. Thus, among others, the comet with six tails of 1744 observed by Chezeau; also the comet of 1680. Newton calculated that the flaming globe which composed the nucleus of this comet would take fifty thousand years to cool.

Science to-day has no more said the last word about comets than has the science of yesterday.

Science says the first word on everything, and the last word on nothing.

Astronomy, that micography of heaven, is the most magnificent of the sciences because it is mingled with a certain amount of divination. The hypothesis is one of its essentials.

In all the sciences, contrasting with the general light, there is a corner of darkness. Astronomy alone has no shadows, or, to speak more truly, its very shadows are dazzling. The proved is evident, the con-

jectural is splendid. Astronomy has its clear side and its luminous side; on its clear side it is tinctured with algebra, on its luminous side with poetry.

To attempt to peer into the invisible, to explain the inexplicable? What a temptation! what a chimera!

On all sides of man, in his wretched limitation, radiate, we do not say four infinites—the infinite being indivisible—but four aspects of the infinite: two of duration, future eternity and past eternity; two of space, the infinitely great and the infinitely small.

"Past eternity," what a contradiction! The absurd and the evident, the impossible and the real, the mingled and the indivisible, combined to form the inconceivable!

And under what form shall we imagine this prodigious universal whole?

All that we can say is that the sphere seems to be the form of worlds and that the spherical form is, in fact, that which has neither beginning nor end.

II

We have spoken of immovable stars: this is an error. There is nothing immovable. All this profound of space is moving. We think we are gazing on sparkling fixity. We are deceived. This fixity moves. This immobility changes.

It is certain that, tho fixt for us, our Sun with its group of planets is making an immense journey around some other immense sun.

Further, stars grow brighter or pale. Sirius, to-day white, formerly was red.

Arcturus, Procyon, Vega, Sirius, Altair, have their proper motions, as has been ascertained. Mira advances and recedes, Algol advances and recedes. A star in the Ram recedes; one in the Dragon advances, moves forward, then draws back. The ninth and tenth stars of Taurus have disappeared.

Other stars have appeared and disappeared. Hipparcus saw one, Hadrian saw one, Honorius saw one, Albumazar, who, in the nineteenth century, wrote the

book "The Revolution of the Years," saw one. Charles IX. had his own in 1572; Philip III. had his own in 1604. A star in the Fox has come and gone several times, and after much hesitation has gone for good. The North star itself is not imperturbable. Its flame changes. The ruling star is relieved like a soldier on guard. The pole star of Homer is not ours.

There exist double stars, triple stars, quadruple stars. Three suns, one green, one yellow and one red, revolving around one another in full pursuit at a speed of eighty million leagues a second—such is Aldebaran.

How do these animated globes of varying speed contrive to subsist? How explain their molecular adhesion? How is such centrifugal force overcome? Very little light has been thrown upon these terrible passions.

These gigantic movements of the stars are accomplished in the depths of such an abyss, and are so obscure by reason of distance, that they are often hidden by a

thread of platina crossing the lens, altho this thread is a thousand times finer than a cobweb.

Darkness appears as unity.

What is there in this unity?

Man has taken soundings, first with the naked eye, then with the telescope, then with the mind.

What is this unity?

It is blackness, it is terrible simplicity, it is the dead immanence of the gulf, it is the desert, it is absence.....No. It is the swarming of the prodigious. It is Presence.

Each of the three plummets of man has revealed something. The eye has seen six thousand stars, the telescope has seen one hundred million suns, the soul has seen God.

Who is God?

God.

To the Unknown God of Saint Paul the Areopagus opposed the Unknowable God.

The Unknowable God is the Incontestable God.

Represent to yourself millions of suns like ours, with all their legions of planets set overhead in space at such a distance as to seem only a vague whiteness, an indistinct paleness, a sort of powdering of stars: we call this the Milky Way.

Our Earth and all the stars that we see, and all the constellations of the zodiac, and all the universe in the zenith and the nadir, constitute a prodigious disc of stars of which the Milky Way is the edge. Here we have a thickening of suns that makes a great livid stain in the infinite.

And after the planet, after the star, after the Milky Way, what remains?

The nebula.

What is the nebula?

We see here and there in the heavens certain pale spaces, certain indeterminate stains, something which is light without ceasing to be shadow, unspeakable apparitions resembling fantoms. These are the nebulæ.

The sun, the planets belong to us; the constellation, the pole star which is seventy-six million leagues distant belong to us: the Milky Way belongs to us.

The nebula has nothing in common with us.

That star whose light requires a hundred thousand years to reach us, is our celestial compatriot; it inhabits the same firmament as we, it is commingled in our stellar disc; it is one of the family.

The nebula is a stranger. Our comets do not go that far. They would be disquieted at that distance, and would fear lest they might never be able to find their way back to our suns.

Our light goes there, for light is something holy and is the universal bond.

Perhaps also there exist fleets of comets, unknown "transatlantic" liners, which make the passage across these monstrous spaces.

The nebula is another stellar disc, composed of billions of suns, and constituting the Milky Way of some unknown firmament.

Herschel has counted more than two thousand nebulæ.

Our Milky Way is the dwelling; the nebulæ are the city.

Beyond the world of planets there is the world of stars; beyond the world of stars there is the world of nebulæ.

Moons are satellites of a planet; planets are satellites of a star; stars are satellites of a nebula; nebulæ are satellites of the Unknown Center.

In proportion as the distance from one star to another exceeds the distance between the planets, so the distance from one nebula to another exceeds the distance between the stars. To express in figures the distance of the planets, we take as the unit the league of four thousand meters; to express our distance of the stars we take as the unit our solar ray with its speed of thirty-eight million leagues; to express the distance of the nebulæ it is necessary to take as the unit the stellar ray—that is to say, a unit which represents at least seven thousand billion leagues. The distance from the sun to the nearest nebula is to the distance from the earth to the sun in the proportion of seven thousand billion leagues to a league. There are no more angles to calculate, no

more parallax to dream of; here geometry has become frightful.

One feels overwhelmed by the unknown creation.

Let us assert it, even at these depths of space the telescope has been able to descry forms. Messier, from the high logette of the Hôtel de Cluny, discovered in the twenty-seventh nebula two luminous circles occupying the foci of an ellipse. The nebula of Hercules has the shape of a sponge, the holes being stars. The nebula of Canes Venatici, a species of flaming hair, revolves in a spiral round a blazing nucleus. Only the eternity of a hurricane can express this frightful torsion.

Who knows where human observation will end? From Francœur to Flammarion the number of stars visible through the telescope has increased from seventy-five million to one hundred million.

Because within the strict limits of the Milky Way we have as yet counted only eighteen million suns, there is no reason why we should be discouraged.

On the day when our lenses shall have arrived at perfection, an event by no means impossible, the immeasurable depths of space being peopled with stars at various distances, all these luminous points within the range of the telescope will appear crowded together without having any gaps—they will have become a surface—and the heavens at night will appear to us like an immense gold ceiling.

The heavens present this startling phenomenon: always light, never certitude.

The immeasurable distance of the stars, produces in the heavens a state of eternal illusion. The heavens that we see are not present, but past. To-day is something unknown in the heavens; what we have before our eyes is Yesterday, a Yesterday which in the case of certain stars is thousands of years remote.

Capricorn, which we admire every evening, was perhaps extinct seven hundred years before the Battle of Marengo; the stars now revealed in the telescope of three meters diameter were perhaps nonexistent in the time of Charlemagne, and

the stars which the telescope of six meters diameter reveals at this moment had probably already vanished at the time of the Trojan War. At the hour at which we have arrived, who can certify that there is a single star remaining in the heavens?

The most far-off stars being situated at an infinite distance, and infinite distance being inexhaustible, their light, even after the star had disappeared, would keep on reaching us forever; and if it came about that all the stars were extinguished from the heavens, we should never know it. We should see throughout eternity those dead stars shining in the depths of space.

Is this all?

By no means

What vehicle shall we adopt?

The locomotive travels fifteen leagues an hour. The hurricane travels sixty leagues an hour. The cannon-ball travels seven hundred leagues an hour.

The locomotive drags, the hurricane limps, the cannon-ball is a tortoise.

Let us bestride a ray of light.

This is a mount four thousand times swifter than the cannon-ball, four million two hundred thousand times swifter than the hurricane, and seventeen million times swifter than the locomotive.

It makes, as you know, seventy thousand leagues a second.

Start.

Light launches you from the Earth to the Sun in eight minutes, from the Sun to Oceanus in four hours, from Oceanus to Centaurus in three years and eight months, from Centaurus to the pole star in twenty-eight years, from the pole star to the Milky Way in sixteen thousand eight hundred years, from the Milky Way to the nebula of Canes Venatici in five million years,—you have not yet taken a step.

The apparitions of the universe will continue to loom.

The unsoundable will remain before you in its entirety.

Beyond the visible the invisible, beyond the invisible the unknown.

Everywhere, everywhere, in the zenith, at the nadir, in front, behind, above, below, in the heights, in the depths, looms the formidable darkness of the Infinite.

And all this would be but one of the twin aspects of the sublime vision.

Side by side with the infinite of space is the infinite of time.

Consider this, that with probable durations of billions and billions of ages, these myriads of stars and suns, subject withal to the universal laws of birth and death, have doubtless a beginning and an end, but are being transformed, replaced and renewed continually without truce and without end, forever, forever, forever....

Shall we dare to return upon ourselves from these prodigious heights?

Imperceptible beings upon our imperceptible globe during the second which constitutes our life, are we not very small and very miserable creatures compared to this overwhelming Infinite?

No, since we comprehend it.

III

Yes, through knowledge, I catch a glimpse of the incomprehensible; tho ignorant, I feel it, which is more formidable still. Facing this immensity, facing this precipice of wonders, what would you that I do? In my ignorance I shall fall headlong into the abyss; my knowledge will cause me to wither away with fear.

It will not do to imagine that the infinite can weigh upon the imagination of man without leaving thereon its impression. Between the believer and the atheist there is merely the difference between the impression in relief and the impression in intaglio. The atheist is more of a believer than he thinks. To deny is, at bottom, an angry form of affirmation. The breach proves the wall.

At any rate, to deny is not to destroy. The breaches that atheism makes in the infinite resemble the rents that a cannon-ball makes in the sea. They close again

and all continues as before. The immanent persists.

And it is from the immanent, always present, always tangible, always inexplicable, always inconceivable, always incontestable, that human adoration proceeds. A kind of shuddering pervades the universe. Such things as we have just spoken of can not exist without producing a sort of sacred horror, perceptible to the soul of man, and, as it were, the shadow of the formidable reality. Before the immanent man feels his littleness, the briefness of his days, the weakness of his visual ray.

What, then, is there back of all this?

Nothing, say you.

Nothing?

What! I, a worm of the earth am possest of an intelligence, and this immensity is without one! Oh, pardon us, Abyss of Infinity!

But whatsoever you may be, gaze on high, search the depths, contemplate this fact, this precipice, this dizziness, this obsession, this insistence—the Infinite!

No more calculation possible; the same swarming and the same genesis everywhere, in the celestial sphere as in the drop of water; the three thousand species of ephemera discovered on a single rosebush by Bonnet of Geneva, Saturn's ring with its diameter of sixty-seven thousand five hundred leagues, the seventeen thousand facets of a fly's eye, the three multicolored stars of Aldebaran which revolve concentrically at the rate of one hundred million leagues a minute, the ant dragging a grub over the jasmine leaf, the calculation of parallaxes, that sidereal ladder vainly applied to the fixt stars, the diameter of our orbit—seventy million leagues, yet insufficient to serve as a basis for the triangulation of the stars, the bolide and the comet, the ringworm and the vibrion, Venus, the evening star, beaming over ocean solitudes, that inconceivable noise resembling the rustling of silk which accompanies the aurora borealis, the nebulæ, those clouds of the abyss, those atomic forests that we call mold, the hurricanes of Jupiter, the volcanoes

of Mars, the hydras swimming in globules of blood, the infinitely great of Campanella, the infinitely small of Swammerdam, the endless life forever visible above and below—deprive me of all this if you would have me cease to pray!

What would you have me reply to the mysterious affirmation which proceeds from these amazing things? How would you have me act, man as I am, in the midst of all this?

Night is illimitable. Why is the world made thus? We do not know. In the midst of this darkness there are lights; what is the purpose of these lights? They utter the unspeakable. They illumine the invisible. They enlighten, for they resemble torches; they gaze on something, for they resemble the eye of man. They are terrible and charming. They are faint lights scattered through the unknown. We call them stars.

The ensemble of all this passes the bounds of chimera and is overwhelming in its reality. A madman could not have dreamed it, a genius could not have imag-

ined it. All this is a unity. It is the unity. And I feel that I am part of it.

How can I extricate myself from it? What reply can I make to the mighty apparition of the constellations?

All light has a voice, and speaks; and what it utters I understand. And the heavens are full of light. Forces embrace and fructify; all is at once lever and fulcrum, opposing aggregations are germinating forces, dissonances are harmonies, contraries embrace, what looks like the fantom of a dream is of geometry, prodigies converge, the law that governs the planets and their satellites is recognized in the infinitesimal molecule, the sun confronts the atom, and they mutually attest each other; what was yesterday shall be to-morrow. All this is absolute. What do I know concerning it?

And, in the midst of all these concentric abysses you would have me shrink and shrivel up into my ego! Into what ego? Into my material ego! Into the I of my flesh, into the I that eats, the I of my digestive apparatus, the I of my clay?

You would have me say to all that which is: I am not! You would have me refuse my adhesion to the indivisible! You would have me refuse to obey the law of gravitation! You would forbid me to gaze, to question, to conjecture! In the midst of the prodigious cosmic motion you would condemn me to petrifaction! You wish me to be motionless amid the universal breathing! You would forbid my little handful of earth to be moved when everywhere on land and sea, from the zenith to the nadir, from the telescope and from the microscope, from the constellation and from the acarus, the infinite stirs in me! You would have me content with these two certitudes: I was born and I shall die! certitudes which are themselves two abysses.

No. It may not be. The pancreas is not the sole consideration. The processes of my chyle, my bile and my lymph can not be the goal of my philosophy. There is my ego, but there is something else as well. The sidereal universe is in question.

Hence bewilderment. Hence hands

stretched toward the enigma. Hence the haggard eye of the ascetic. Mankind can not help questioning this obscurity and awaiting its response. What is Destiny? What is man's relation to the world? What is life? What was the past? What will be the future? What is the world? Of what nature is the prodigious being in whom is realized in the heart of the absolute the strange identity of necessity and free will?

These questions result in mental prostration, and the strongest minds totter under the pressure of such hypotheses.

Men of simple mind, try to think; thinkers, try to pray.

Life and Death

WHAT is death for man?

Is it merely the end of something? Is it the end of all?

Two problems which the thinker is constantly proposing to himself, since upon their solution depend the problems of morality.

If death be the end of all, it would be necessary to draw this conclusion: Light exists in the material world, but not in the moral world. The sun, on rising each morning, tells us: I am a symbol; I am the symbol of another sun which one day shall enlighten your souls as to-day I enlighten your bodily eyes.—Well, the sun lies! We should have to accept as true that horrible thing before which antiquity recoiled: *solem falsum.*

Man is a creature thoroughly distinct from the brute, in that the brute is fatally and without exception an innocent being, while man is capable of both good and evil. The brute is passive, man is free.

What is it that makes him free? It is the soul.

Therefore the soul exists.

All these words: love, loyalty, modesty, devotion, faith, duty, conscience, probity, honor, virtue, are no longer words; they are actual things of the soul; they are the faculties which are consequent on its liberty. To the radiant faculties correspond the faculties of darkness: hate, vice, shame, turpitude, egotism, wickedness, falsehood, cruelty, crime. Between good and evil, man may choose; he is free.

Now whoever asserts freedom, asserts responsibility.

Responsibility in this life? Evidently not. For nothing is more demonstrable than the possible and frequent prosperity of the wicked, and the unmerited misfortune of the good during their sojourn on earth. How many just men have had nothing but misery and anguish to endure up to their last day! How many criminals have lived till extreme age in the peaceful and serene enjoyment of the

good things of this world, including the respect and consideration of all.

Is man, then, responsible after life? Evidently so, since he is not during life.

In that case something of him survives in order that he may bear this responsibility: the soul.

Free will in the soul implies its immortality.

Therefore death is not the end of all. It is but the end of one thing and the commencement of another. At death man ends, the soul begins.

I appeal to whoever has gazed upon the beloved face of the dead with that strange anxiety in which hope is mingled with despair; to whoever has traversed that fatal hour, the final hour of joy and the first of mourning,—is there not a feeling that someone is still there? that all is not ended? that something is yet possible?

We seem to feel round this head the rustle of wings that have just taken flight. The air seems still stirred by the palpitations of that heart which no longer

beats. That open mouth seems to call back what has just gone, and one might say that it utters mysterious words to the invisible world.

This amazement is not caused by contact with nothingness; it is the effect of the shock of this life with the other.

I am a soul. I know well that what I shall render up to the grave is not myself. That which is myself will go elsewhere.

Earth, thou art not my abyss!

The more I think, the more this truth reveals itself to me: man is nothing more than a captive.

The prisoner painfully scales the walls of his dungeon, climbs from projection to projection, places his foot wherever there is a stone wanting, and finally mounts to the air-hole. From there he gazes out and distinguishes afar off—the country, forests, meadows, hills, houses, cities, living beings, the paths he has formerly traveled and will doubtless travel again; he breathes the free air, he sees the light.

It is the same with man.

Astronomy, chemistry, geology, the calculation of time, the measurement of suns, all the discoveries, all that has escaped to the surface, all those things that we have surprized from eternity, the authentication of the infinite as something existing outwardly, dazzling the intelligence with its prodigious radiance—all those things whose meaning we did not possess, art, science, poetry, revery, calculus, algebra,—all these are but glimpses through the bars of a prison.

The prisoner does not doubt that, upon the day the gates are thrown open, he will recover the fields, the woods, the plains, the country where his true life is—liberty. He sees all this, he knows all this exists.

How can man doubt that he shall find eternity upon his release?

Certain thinkers propose these questions: Shall we have a body in the next life? Shall we eat? Shall we sleep? To me there is nothing repugnant in these

questions. Why should we not have a body, a subtle and ethereal body, of which our human body would be but a rough sketch?—Shall we eat? Why should we not live, for example, the life of flowers, which have no set hours for eating, but are constantly taking nourishment and throwing off waste: double labor which constitutes life?—Shall we sleep? Our existence, composed of hours of consciousness interrupted by hours of sleep, is but a formless shadow of that superior existence in which revery will seek repose in thought, in which ecstasy will seek repose in contemplation.

What prevents us from picturing to ourselves this celestial life?

The soul thirsts for the absolute, but this thirst of the soul can not be shared by man. Man being in time and space—that is to say, living this momentary life which is nothing more than the ghost of life—belongs to the relative. Whoever asserts limit implies relation and proportion. Let us then content ourselves with the relative, since we are limited. Let us not

seek for the absolute here below. We shall find it elsewhere. The absolute is not of this world. It is too mighty for this earth; it would cause it to swerve from its orbit if it ever rested its weight upon it.

There are two laws, the law of spheres and the law of space. The law of spheres is death; limit necessitates destruction. The law of space is eternity; the infinite permits of expansion.

Between the two worlds, between the two laws, there is a bridge, transformation.

To escape gravitation is to escape limitation; to escape limitation is to escape death.

The ambition of the inhabitant of the spheres should therefore be to become an inhabitant of space.

Man is a frontier. Double being, he marks the limit of two worlds. On this side of him, the material creation; on that side, mystery.

To be born is to enter the visible world; to die is to enter the invisible world.

Of these two worlds, which is the shadow? Which is the light?

Strange to say, the luminous world is the invisible world; the luminous world is that which we do not see. Our eyes of flesh see only night.

Yes, matter is night.

Fix the eyes of the soul upon this immense mystery which awaits us.

Man stands upon the brink of an abyss. You tremble for the somnambulist who walks, without knowing it, upon the edge of a roof; and you do not tremble for the man who, while thinking of something else, walks upon the brink of death!

Wo to him who lives with his eyes fixt upon the material world, and his back turned upon the unknown world.

Death is a change of garments.

Soul! You were clothed with darkness, you are about to be clothed with light!

Catholics, you would bring your bodies into the life hereafter! It is as if you wished to go to a feast clothed with an old, stained garment.

A certain mountain in the Andes includes, in distinct zones upon its slope of some leagues, all the climates found upon

the earth from the tropics to the pole; in the same way a nation like France includes in its history, as upon an immense declivity, step by step, layer by layer, shade by shade, all the ages of the life of humanity, from Teutatès who is savagery to Voltaire who is civilization.

What is there beyond the pole? What is there beyond the summits? Heaven.

What is there beyond civilization? Harmony.

The blue sky. Death.

It is in the tomb that man takes the final step of progress.

In proportion as man advances in life, he arrives at a sort of possession of ideas and objects, which constitutes the very habit of life. He becomes his own tradition; he clings strongly to the memory of what he has seen, of what he has done, of what he has felt, to the time when he was a child, to the time when he was a youth, to the time of manhood, to his games, his loves, his labors; he turns with delight to all that has constituted his unity, to his illusions, to his affections, to his pas-

sions, to his joys, above all to his sorrows. Each day that he has traversed is a link; and for him, as a man, life is the whole chain. He feels that there is in him something indivisible. To be is to be the sum of all that one has been; this, above all, is what he comprehends. Offer him a new life and youth on condition that he shall no longer know what he has known, no longer love what he has loved—he will prefer to die. It is easier to renounce the future than the past.

For the intelligent creature to be is to compare perpetually what one has been with what one is.

Hence the unconquerable power of the I.

Man does not understand nor accept immortality except on condition of self-remembrance.

If life is not endless, distinct and adherent, constituting a sort of endless chain which passes through the phenomenon, death, without breaking, uniting being to being and creating unity in the multiple; if this persistence of the I throughout

ages of existence is not a fact, there is no such thing as solidarity, and the capital principle of democracy vanishes.

The ephemeral I suppresses all bonds, exterior, superior, anterior and ulterior.

Materialism is logically and fatally egoism.

On every sphere there is a being that transcends it, and is its means of contact, its bond of union, its bridge connecting it with other spheres. Upon the earth this being is man.

In death man becomes sidereal.

Death is the *revanche* of the soul.

Life is the power by which the body links the soul to earth; death is the power of the soul to lift the body beyond earth by means of elimination. In terrestrial life the soul loses that which is radiant; in extra-terrestrial life the body loses that which weighs it down.

If there were no other life God would not be honorable.

Death, desolation for the heart, is triumph for the soul.

Our life dreams the Utopia. Our death achieves the ideal.

Death is not unjust. It is a continuation.

Let us habituate ourselves to gaze without fear upon this mysterious prolongation of man into eternity. Let us try to pierce with our gaze as far as possible into the sepulcher.

Let us lean upon the brink of life and contemplate this august obscurity. We shall be better off there. Death is holy and wholesome. All that we can see of it is full of consolation.

My glance pierces the farthest possible into this shadow, and I see, at a depth which would be frightful, were it not sublime, the immense dawn of an eternal day.

Where are the abysses? Where are the escarpments? Why are we content with the commonplace aspects of this life and this earth? There ought to be somewhere frightful caverns, rents in the infinite, with enormous stars and unheard-of lights in their depths.

Contemplation reveals to us the infinite; meditation reveals to us eternity.

The notion of the infinite reaches us

from the external world; the notion of eternity is revealed to us by the interior world.

Now infinity and eternity are the two aspects of God.

To see God under the first aspect we look upon creation. To see Him under the second aspect we look into our soul.

God is eternal. The soul is immortal.

Do not confound eternity with immortality. Understand the meaning of immortality.

The whole creation is a perpetual ascension, from brute to man, from man to God. To divest ourselves more and more of matter, to be clothed more and more with spirit, such is the law. Each time we die we gain more of life.

Souls pass from one sphere to another without loss of personality, become more and more bright, unceasingly approach nearer to God.

What! you say; souls are uninterrupted series of transformations, and by a perpetual movement are approaching nearer to God? But then the day will come when

by reason of continually drawing nearer to God, they will finally become merged in Him; they will lose their individuality, in other words, they will die.

Hear me:

When the asymptote meets the hyperbola, the soul will meet God.

The point of contact is in infinity.

Continually to draw nearer, never to meet: such is the law of the asymptote, such is the law of the soul.

It is this ascension without end, it is this perpetual pursuit of God which, for the soul, constitutes immortality.

There is not a human being walking under the light of the sun who is not warmed by its rays.

In the immensity of the infinite creation there is not a human being who is not reached by a ray from God.

By means of this ray each individual soul is in direct communication with the central soul.

Hence the efficacy of that invocation, prayer.

A man sleeps. He dreams. He dreams

that he is a wild beast, a lion, a wolf, and he experiences all the adventures of the wilds. On awakening he recovers himself. The dream has vanished. He is what he was before. He is a man and not a lion.

The next night he has another dream. He is a bird or a serpent. He awakes and finds himself a man.

So it is with life. So with all the terrestrial lives that we may be condemned to traverse. Planetary lives are like sleep. These lives may have no connection whatever with one another, any more than our dreams at night.

The I which persists after the awakening is the I anterior and external to the dream. The I which persists after death is the I anterior and external to life.

The sleeper who awakes finds himself man. The living being who dies finds himself spirit.

An idea has crost my mind. Can it be a glimmer of light?

Two men are talking of the future life. One affirms it, the other denies it. One

says: "There is no death; my I will persist; I feel in me immortality; I call myself soul." The other says: "There is nothing after death; my I will be eaten by worms; I shall die completely; I feel that there is no to-morrow for me; I name myself dust." By what authority do these two men speak? By the authority of intimate conviction. The affirmation of one and the negation of the other have no other source than intuition. Intimate feeling, intimacy itself, the great and holy voice that whispers mysteriously to each soul. In the present case this voice contradicts itself; to the ear of one it says: *immortality;* to the ear of the other it says: *nothingness;* to the conscience of the first it reveals the contrary of what it declares to the second. Can it be possible that both these men speak the truth?

Dante has just written two verses. While he leans on his elbow, meditating, the first verse says to the second: "Do you know what, brother? We are immortal! I feel in myself life everlasting; we are

born for glory; I have the conviction that I shall live through the ages." The second replies: "What a dream! I feel that I shall not live for a day; I have death in me; I am not."

At that moment Dante came out of his revery, took up his pen, reread the two verses, and erased the second.

Both were right.

Are there sketches of souls which feel themselves but sketches, embryo individualities destined for recasting, beings who are mere essays, who shall disappear in nothingness, and who have the consciousness of it?

Are there men whom God blots out?

What! You affirm squarely that what you do not see does not exist? Thus, in the human eye behold certitude; thus, outside the optic chamber blinking under a man's skull, nothing is proved! Logic is the very humble servant of the eyeball! Let not intuition conceive or admit anything whatsoever that has not been declared by sense! At this rate a blind and paralytic deaf-mute who should essay this

stammering utterance in the darkness: *Nothing exists!* would be right.

In your infirmity you make emptiness; you accept your own finiteness for the limits of creation. You apply your briefness to the universe.

But what of that invisible creation which tells you that one day you shall no longer see it?

If you had another organism would you not have other perceptions? Had you but a single additional sense do you not believe that a new aspect of the universal life would be revealed to you? Unknown organisms of ulterior existences await you and will enable you to touch the impalpable and see the incomprehensible.

There is a thing that happens to you every day; you will not say that you are not familiar with this fact. You have slept, it is morning, you open your eyes, your drawn shades permit a gleam of dawn to penetrate your bedchamber; around you you see nothing but four walls and the empty air. All at once a ray of the rising sun passes through a slit in

the shutter, and you perceive a world. In this sudden whiteness you distinguish myriads of objects in suspension, going and coming, revolving, mounting, descending, entering the brightness, plunging into obscurity,—and you never suspected the existence of all this; you see the immensities of the dust specks, this air that you thought empty was peopled. Behold the invisible become visible.

One day you shall awaken in another bed, you shall live that great life that they call death, you shall look and you shall see darkness; and, suddenly, the sun rising out of the infinite will appear in splendor above the horizon, and a ray of light, of the true light, will traverse and lose itself in the profound; then you will be struck with wonder and will see in that band of light millions of unknown beings whirling pell-mell, flying, brooding,—some celestial, some infernal, those invisible beings that you now deny: and you shall feel wings unfolding at your shoulders, and you yourself shall be one of these beings.

God secludes Himself; but the thinker listens at the door.

Whoever has the conception of duty, whoever has the sentiment of right, whoever has the perception of justice and injustice, whoever has a disinterested aim, whoever is self-forgetful in life and allows another to pass on before him, whoever wishes for human kind, whoever has a heart that beats in unison with the heart of humanity, whoever feels himself brother to the poor, the small, the minor, the frail, the infirm, the suffering, the ignorant, the disinherited, the slave, the serf, the negro, the convict, the condemned, whoever desires light for the blind and the idea for the opprest, whoever becomes wretched at the wretchedness of others, whoever works hardest for others, weeps at their weeping and sobs over their wounds, whoever prefers the sacrifice of self to that of his neighbor,

whoever has the vision of truth, whoever has felt the enchantment of the beautiful, whoever listens to a melody, whoever contemplates a flower, whiteness, candor, brightness, a woman, whoever admires a genius, whoever feels emotion at a star, whoever says within himself, "This is good, this is evil," whoever will not crush a fly uselessly, whoever loves and feels the infinite in his love, whoever recognizes that there is a crooked path and a straight line, whoever acts from conscience, whoever has an ideal to which he consecrates himself,—such a one, whoever he may be, whether he knows it or not, believes in God.

Whoever utters the words, conscience, virtue, goodness, love, reason, light, justice, truth, perceives, whether he knows it or not, one of the mysterious profiles of that sublime face: God.

This thing is inconceivable: to behold the rays and deny the sun. The atheist is identical with the blind man.

"But," says the atheist, "I see the sun and I do not see God."

It is because you see with the eyes of the flesh and not with the eyes of the soul.

A soul may be operated upon for atheism as an eyeball for cataract. There are able atheists, intelligent and just; they can be healed by the knowledge of the ideal, and, whatever they may say, this is what they desire most. Atheism is joyless. No one lives voluntarily in the night.

Nature has declared to me that God exists.

What! Man, that atom, that grain of dust, that perishable thing, mean, infirm and vile, man possess what is lacking in the profound and mighty universe with its raying forth of the infinite in all its forms! the creature full of miseries more richly endowed than the creature full of suns! we have a soul and the world be denied one!

Man would be an open eye in the midst of the blind universe! The sole seeing eye!

Seeing what? Nothingness.

We may not say: God is honorable, God is virtuous, God is chaste, God is sincere.

But we may say: God is just, God is good, God is great, God is truth.

Why?

Because honesty, virtue, chastity, sincerity belong to the relative.

And justice, goodness, greatness, truth belong to the absolute.

Why may one not say that God is virtuous?

Because He is perfect.

A being who can have no relative quality, and who has all the intrinsic qualities, exists of necessity. God proves Himself by His attribute of the absolute.

Creation is moved by two kinds of motors, both invisible: souls and forces.

Forces are mathematical, souls are free. Forces, being algebraic, can not deviate; aberration is possible in souls. It has been provided for; freedom has a regulator, conscience.

Conscience is no other thing than a sort of mysterious geometry of the moral order.

As for the being whom we name God and whom we may also name The Center, He participates in two natures of which He is the point of intersection.

He is the Soul—Force.

The idea of God is related to solar light. Judaism, Sabeism, Buddhism, Polytheism, Manichæism, Mahometanism, Christianity, are of the lunar light. Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Orpheus, Confucius, Manes, Mahomet, Jesus, are species of planets that revolve round the orb and reflect its light.

Religions, moons of God, give light to man in the night; hence those fantoms, those illusions, those optical falsehoods, those terrors, those apparitions, those visions which fill the horizon of the peoples, among whom religion's day has not yet dawned.

The ghost which looms from this doubtful brightness is called superstition.

Every ray that comes directly from the sun bears at its extremity the figure of the sun, and whatever the form of the opening through which it reaches us, whether this opening be square, polygonal or triangular, it ignores this form, and invariably imprints upon the surface which arrests it a circular image. Thus all

light which comes directly from God imprints upon our mind—no matter what may be the character of the brain—the exact idea of God, and leaves thereon His real imprint.

At the same time, just as the rays of the moon lose the figure of the sun and bring to us instead of its image a certain aspect of the medium through which they pass, the idea of God, reflected by religions and proceeding from them, loses, so to speak, the form of God and takes on all the more or less miserable configurations of the human brain.

In politics, I put the country above party. In religion, I put God above dogma. If I were sure that this grave statement would be heard and understood seriously I would say that I am of all religions as I am of all parties. Here *of* signifies *in the same manner.* I believe in the God of all men, I believe in the love of all hearts, I believe in the truth of all souls.

Thinkers, meditate upon this; this is the faith, the great faith, the true faith, the only faith which to-day can civilize revolutionary generations.

The ray is only perceived from the heights. You are made to attain the heights and to contemplate the ray. You have wings, since you dream; you have eyes, since you think.

My belief in God is direct.

The crowd has weak eyes, that is its own affair. Dogmas and practises are lenses through which the short-sighted see the stars. As for me, I see God with the naked eye. I leave the dogma, the practise and the symbol to myopic intelligences. The lense is precious, the eye is still more precious. Faith through the dogma is good; immediate faith is better.

I respect the Sunday mass in my parish. I attend it rarely; this is because I am assisting perpetually, reverent, dreaming and attentive, at that other eternal mass which God is celebrating night and day in nature, His great church.

A religion is a translation.

Those men whom we call prophets fix their gaze on an unknown something which is beyond man.

There is a light on high, they see it.

They adjust a mirror toward it. This mirror is more or less imperfect, more or less polished, more or less chromatic, more or less clear.

This mirror is the actual prophet of the conscience.

Events, despotisms, kings, captains, masters, sometimes raise much dust around it.

This prophet is a seer. This conscience, which brings enlightenment to an age, sees farther than that age but participates in the age. It has its transparency or opacity, it has its purity or its rawness, it has its savagery or its refinement. It has in certain measure the same color and the same density. Hence, according to the surface proper to each age and each mirror, a more or less clear-cut image of the star, sometimes a vague glimmering as with Socrates, sometimes shadow as with Spinoza, sometimes the specter as with Torquemada.

Hence among the peoples all those fierce reverberations of God-idolatries. Hence all that falsehood projected by truth.

Sometimes the brain of the prophet is prism as well as mirror, and irises with superstition and fable the contour of God. Sometimes this brain is in shadow and reflects Being on a black background; then you have the pagoda of Juggernaut, and earth has a place, a region, a given point where the reflection of God is the Demon. Misinterpretation of the translator goes to such a length.

Strabismus of the soul can create terrible religions. Many a temple squints at Satan.

Wherein is the blame. In the object revealed? No. It was there. In the prophet? No. He has done his best.

Let us accuse earthly impotence, human insufficiency, the ruling medium, the given moment. A certain age, certain error. A certain society, certain falsehood. Chimera is in proportion to ignorance. Bad faith, there is none. We are speaking of the founders of religion, and not of its exploiters. Mahomet who succeeded, Swedenborg who miscarried, were very convinced visionaries. There are no

impostors. There are those who mold truth while groping in the dark, assayers often without a touchstone, more or less distant scouts, obscure mouths speaking to troubled multitudes, shallow dreamers indoctrinating the ignorant, twilight whitening the mists, the myopic leading the blind.

To sum up: all religions are bad, and all are good.

Shatter them all; in the resulting dust of the immense broken mirror, in these innumerable pieces swept up in a heap, you shall see the shining of a single star. From all these portraits of Truth, deformed to the point of falsehood, flung to earth, there shall emerge the august image. Out of all these religions which have been destroyed issues the indestructible. This, as we have said, is because all religions are versions. Under all these thicknesses lies the text.

All the Bibles pounded up distil the Infinite.

The idol placed in the crucible gives God. Jupiter is a translation, Brahma is

a translation, Vitziliputli is a translation. Fô is a translation. Odin is a translation. Elohim is a translation.

One day the Revolution, daughter of the eighteenth century and mother of the nineteenth, rejects with indignation all these names, overthrows all these altars, exterminates all these symbols, annihilates God under all these forms,—then pauses in thought, searches the founts of darkness, and lifting her head utters the words: The Supreme Being.

Religions are a slight approach to the absolute. A religion is a mask. But what does the mask prove? The face. The mask may be hideous tho the face is sublime; it is so on high. The prophets are at work upon living eternity. They endeavor to extract it for your needs; they give you all they can. Take of it yourselves if they no longer give it to you pure and in abundant measure. A religion is a translation of God proportionate to your spiritual endowment.

You have not the strength to be religious? Then become a devotee.

Religions do a useful thing: they narrow God to the limits of man. Philosophy replies by doing a necessary thing: it elevates man to the plane of God.

True philosophy turns aside from religions, and pushes forward to religion.

Does not nature furnish you enough of mystery but you must needs make more of it with dogma?

As regards the incomprehensible, content yourself with the necessary.

All direct light, as I have said, bears the form of the medium whence it emanates; in the solar ray there is the image of the sun; in the divine ray there is the image of God.

The solar ray in traversing the prism is decomposed into three colors: blue, yellow and red. The divine ray in traversing the obscure chamber of the brain is decomposed into three notions: justice, goodness and beauty.

It is the luminous spectrum of the triple divine knowledge, forever raying forth from beneath the human skull that is called conscience.

The solar ray is named white light; one may give the same name to the conscience.

Conscience, therefore, is the interior solar spectrum. The sun illumines the body, God illumines the mind.

In the depths of the human brain there is, as it were, the moon of God.

To be one end of the ray of which the ideal is the other; to sing in low-toned voice to the life of the present the mysterious song of the life of the future; to strive to infuse spirit into the flesh, virtue into the word, God into man—such is the sublime office of that winged splendor, conscience.

The endeavor of man, the divine function of freedom, the end of life is to establish on earth in the form of actual works the three ideal notions, to strive that the true, the beautiful, the just be made flesh, in a word to leave after him his conscience translated into action. Human progress lives upon this triple manifestation unceasingly renewed. He who, acting from conscience, spends his soul and draws upon his life to build up truth, is called

Voltaire; he who builds beauty is called Shakespeare; he who builds justice is called Jesus.

There is no genius who has not labored, there is no great man who has not brought his conscience, his soul, his stone, to one of the three pillars of that pediment of the infinite which we name Truth, Beauty, Justice. Certain ones have labored at two. He who should labor at three would approach God.

To place conscience beyond self, slowly, day by day, to transform it into external reality, into actions or words; to be born with ideas, to die with works; in a word, to upbuild the ideal, to construct it in art and be poet, to construct it in science and be philosopher, to construct it in life and be just—such is the goal of human destiny.

An Atheist

In the beginning of 1852 I was in Brussels. One day some one knocked at my door and entered. It was a young man with a frank smile, a sincere and lively aspect, and a certain elegance of attire. He exhibited considerable white linen, wore a velvet waistcoat with carved buttons, straw-colored gloves, a flower in his lapel, and had a cane in his hand. To the question I addrest to him he replied:

"I am a priest."

"Or rather," he added, "I was one. I no longer am one. I have left the false for the true. To-day, Monsieur, I am what you are, a proscribed man."

I besought this proscribed man to be seated.

"My name is Anatole Leray," said he.

We began to talk. He told me the story of his life. He had been reared in such fashion that, one day at twenty-five years of age, he found himself a priest. That

had woke him up. The dream of a long mystical education had vanished for Anatole Leray on the day he suddenly beheld, while still in the bloom of youth, an impregnable wall, a wall of shadow and of granite—the priesthood—loom between nature and himself. His first mass had seemed to him like his last hour. In descending from the altar he seemed to himself like a fantom. He remained a long time aghast, his eye fixt on the horror of an impossible life.

He was twenty-five years old; he felt the whole of life in his veins; nature had endowed him with a full share of the universal sap; and he was forced to admit to himself that henceforth, for him, this ferment of the instincts was nothing less than a riot of sin. In brief, he had no vocation; and he was frightened at finding it out so late.

This resistance of the priest to the priesthood went on silently increasing for a number of years; he fought, he strained, he mercilessly forced his ideas to submit to what had been imposed upon

him as duty; he was austere, faithful and honorable in his relations to the sanctuary. Finally, after much suffering, he withdrew from the contest, conquered. That is to say, conqueror. The man triumphed over the priest. Anatole yielded to youth, to life, to healthy and irresistible nature. These, indeed, were the very words he used in explaining the fact. And, honorably preferring to be called an apostate by Rome than a hypocrite by his own conscience, he withdrew from the church.

To him who departs from this austere place there is but one door open—democracy. His natural bent led him thither. Before becoming a churchman he had been a son of the people. Anatole Leray was of a poor peasant family of Brittany. He therefore went back among the people quite naturally, as a drop of water into the ocean. There he found himself at home.

He related all this simply and with a sort of naïveté at once eloquent and convincing. His restoration to the people had

matured him. There was in him a political thinker. He had written for several journals. He was a revolutionist thrilling with conviction.

From the revelation of his life he passed to the recital of his ideas. I listened to him.

At a certain moment there took place in him something that resembled an explosion.

What follows is a reproduction of his ideas, in other terms doubtless, but with that exception, rigorously exact; not literal, perhaps, but certainly faithful.

"Look you, Monsieur," cried he, "all this at least should serve for a lesson. Henceforth democracy should take notice. It is necessary to make man over again, to recreate the people in the children. It is to education that the logic of the Revolution should be applied."

"I am of that opinion," I said to him.

He became excited.

"As for myself, Monsieur, the whole of education consists in this: to extirpate from the human mind every species of the supernatural."

"What do you understand by that?" I demanded.

"By that I understand that man is lost in religious fantasmagoria. Superstitions mean the smothering of the future. While the nations of the earth breathe the ambient fanaticism, expect nothing from human reason. Monsieur, the old human mind is foundering under full sail, is leaking everywhere, and is being overwhelmed in sacred chimeras. Let us hold fast to immediate realities. Two and two make four; there is no safety beyond that. Let us establish philosophy on fact. Let nothing be admitted that is not humanly verifiable. Let us accept only the visible and the tangible. I wish that all my beliefs may be numbered on my ten fingers. War on the marvelous! Let the people believe in nothing but itself. Let us place in the cradle what we see there, the germ. Place in the grave what is there, nothing. Banish all the dreams of beings existing beyond the earth, and of life beyond life. Let us suppress heaven. We are now in heaven. The earth rolls through it.

Heaven is yonder. Let us reason in strong, clear-cut fashion. Death to dreams! He who does not want the fruit cuts down the tree. Let us do away with all pretext for religions."

"What then are your religious opinions?" said I.

He replied:

"I have been brought up in the seminary."

"Well."

"I am an atheist."

"If you pretend to draw that consequence," observed I, "I can not admit it. Because one has herded goats one is not Giotto; a Jesuit college does not necessarily produce Voltaire. For the rest, I listen to you. Continue."

"But" replied he, "I have said all. To disentangle one's self of hypotheses, to escape from the prison of chimeras, to rescue therefrom the human race, that captive of old whom all the religious have kept under lock and key—such is the goal.

"I have no more liking than you," said I, "for hypotheses that result in supersti-

tion and chimeras that serve to shackle human reason. It would seem, then, that we both hold the same philosophy. Nevertheless I think that we are not in accord. Be more precise."

"Well then," replied he, "I demand the complete suppression of what spiritualists call the ideal. The ideal is supernaturalism. Relieve the world of supernaturalism—that is to say, banish God. Eradicate supernaturalism from man—that is to say, banish the soul. No more of the eternal, no more of the immortal. Let us have these verities as the basis of education. All is here. I have finished."

"You have hardly commenced," replied I. "In your view, then, what is the world?"

"Pure matter."

"And man?"

"Pure matter."

"Distinguish," said I, "between matter and matter."

"It would be absurd. Matter equals matter. Therein is the great basis of equality."

"But," said I, "organisms——?"

"Organisms are but modes. These modes, fatal and blind in themselves, engender those mirages which constitute a sort of ladder of clouds, and which you call first intelligence, then conscience, then soul, steps of the ladder which mount to God. This ladder applies to all religions. It is a question of overthrowing it. It is necessary to break it down step by step—God, soul, conscience, intelligence, organism. Down with the organism if it becomes miraculous—that is to say, if it pretends to argue from diversity of organism any superiority of one form of matter over another. Down with the aristocracy of organisms. Modes which vanish are simply symbols of Nothingness. Everything reverts to the atom, the indivisible and unconscious atom. An atom that would be superior to other atoms would be God. When you assert matter, you assert equality. Matter is adequate to itself."

I regarded him fixedly.

"So that the gnat that flies, the thistle

that sprouts, the pebble that rolls, are the equals of man?"

He had a moment of hesitation, then replied with a loyalty that seemed stronger in him than will itself:

"You are remorseless; but the syllogism is true."

"Monsieur," said I, "rectilinear logicians are rare. You reason straight ahead and with inflexible good faith. I ought not to abuse this. I renounce then the cruelty of the extreme syllogism. Let us confine ourselves to man; let us follow thither your premises: no soul, no God, no supernaturalism, no ideal; matter is equal to itself. And I declare to you that I am going to limit myself to one of the innumerable sides of the question."

"I am listening to you," said he in turn.

And I asked him:

"What, in your view, is the aim of man on earth?"

"Happiness."

"For me," said I, "it is duty. It is not, however, a matter of my opinion, but

of yours. I lay aside all sentimental reasoning. In the scales of the equality of matter how much does the happiness of one man exceed in weight and value the happiness of another?"

"Zero."

"Before going further, will you concede that logically every action must have a determining reason?"

"That is incontestable."

"I resume. Then if an occasion presents itself when the happiness of one man must be sacrificed to the happiness of another man, what is the difference in weight of the two kinds of happiness which shall determine the sacrifice of one for the other?"

"Zero."

"Then," replied I, "according to the laws of logic, and confining ourselves to the material fact, which, according to you is the only wisdom, a man never has the right to sacrifice himself for another man?"

All wavering seemed to have ceased in his mind. He replied calmly:

"None."

"And consequently," replied I, "he would have no right to sacrifice his own happiness to the happiness of the human race?"

At this point, Anatole Leray was trembling.

"Ah!" cried he, "if there is question of the human race, it is different."

"How?" said I. "The total of a sum of zeros is zero."

He was silent a moment; then with some effort he tossed me this admission:

"In fact truth is truth. You are ever implacable, but your syllogism is correct."

I pursued:

"I do not pass judgment on your principles; I simply deduce what they contain, and it is with your own help that I have made, step by step, this deduction. You are a good logician, that suffices for me. Man, then, is matter; he comes from nothing, he returns to nothingness; he has a day without a morrow. This day alone belongs to him. All his reasoning powers, all his good sense, all his philosophy,

should be applied to using it and to make it last as long as possible. The only morality is health. The aim of life is happiness. The aim of life is to enjoy. The aim of life is to live. Here we have corollaries without number; I do not care to deduce them all at this moment. I confine myself to asking whether this is not your idea."

"It is indeed my idea."

"And on this reckoning, what, in your opinion, is a young and prosperous man who gives his life for one or more other men, his equals, similar to himself, simple matter and atoms like himself?"

"A fool."

We left each other coldly.

Anatole Leray set out for Brussels, passed through England, and then embarked for Australia. The day the steamer arrived in sight of land, a storm arose. The vessel capsized. The passengers and crew nearly all succeeded in reaching land by means of the life-boats or by swimming. Anatole Leray was among the saved. Meanwhile in the tu-

mult of shipwreck, when the pell-mell of the frightened wretches matches the chaos of the waves and each thinks only of himself, a half-wrecked boat had remained in the surge and was appearing and disappearing in the waves: three women clung to it despairingly. The sea was at the height of its fury; no swimmer even among the hardiest of the sailors dared to risk himself. They kept their eyes fixt on their dripping garments. Anatole Leray flung himself into the surf. He struggled hard and had the satisfaction of bringing one of the women to shore. He dashed in a second time and rescued another. He was worn out with fatigue, torn, bloody. They cried out to him: "Enough! enough!" "What!" said he, "there is still another." And he flung himself a third time into the sea.

He never reappeared.

Supreme Contemplation

I

As the antique Jupiter has three eyes, the poet has triple sight: observation, imagination, intuition. Observation applies more especially to humanity, imagination to nature, intuition to the supernatural.

Through observation, the poet is philosopher and perhaps legislator; through imagination, he is magi and creator; through intuition, he is priest, perhaps seer.

As revealer of facts, he becomes prophet; revealer of ideas, he is apostle. In the first case, Isaiah; in the second, St. Paul.

This triple power inherent in genius—that is to say, human intelligence sublimated—man, by the most natural of optical illusions, has transferred to God. Hence the trimurti which preceded the triagme, which preceded the triad, which preceded the trinity. Hence the imme-

morial and universal triangle worshiped at Delphi, at Saropta, at Teglath-Phalazar, graven in the great syringe, sculptured four thousand years ago in the heart of India, in those frightful mountain interiors scooped into pagodas, and which we refind at Palanqué after having established them at Benares. But the founders of religions have erred, analogy is not always logic, genius may be trinity without God having to suffer from this limitation. Bossuet is mistaken, man alone is great; God is not great, He is infinite. Greatness supposes possible measurement. God is immeasurable. Trinite? in what sense? The Infinite is not three. First, second, third, the illimitable knows nothing of this. The absolute is no more limited by number than by space. Intelligence, power, love, intuition, imagination, observation: this is not God, it is man. God is all that and more. God has an infinite quantity of infinite faculties. It is strange that you should count God on your fingers.

Philosophically and scientifically, one

may say that whoever believes in the Trinity does not believe in God.

What idea, think you, what notion of God could have been held by the man or priest, who like the Jesuit Sollier, for example, wrote: "There is no one above Ignatius Loyola except popes like St. Peter, empresses like Mary, Mother of Jesus, and some monarchs like God the Father and God the Son!"

Unheard-of thing, it is within us that we must look for the external. There is in the heart of man a deep and somber mirror. Therein is the terrible chiaroscuro. The thing reflected by the soul is dizzier than when seen directly. It is more than the image, it is the simulacrum, and in the simulacrum there is a spectrum. This complicated reflection of the Shadow is for reality an augmentation. In leaning over this well, our soul, we perceive at an abysmal distance, in a narrow circle, the immense world. The world thus seen is supernatural and at the same time human, real and at the same time divine. In this obscurity our con-

science seems bribed to give an explanation.

This is what is called intuition.

Humanity, nature, the supernatural. Properly speaking these three orders of facts are three diverse aspects of the same phenomenon. Humanity, of which we are part; nature, which envelops us; the supernatural, which shuts us in while waiting to deliver us, are three concentric spheres having the same center, God.

These three spheres, for they are a vast amalgam, interpenetrate and are confounded, and are unity. One prodigy enters into another. Each ray from these spheres is the prolongation of a ray from another. We make a distinction between them because our comprehension, being successive, has need of division. All at once is not possible for us. The incommensurable cosmic synthesis surcharges and overwhelms us.

The highest geniuses, encyclopedic intelligences as well as epic minds, Bacon as well as Shakespeare, detail the whole to make it comprehensible, and have re-

course to opposing things, to contrasts and to antinomies. This, moreover, is the process of nature itself, which makes use of night to make us the better realize the day. Hobbes said: "Dissection makes the surgeon, analysis makes the philosopher; antithesis is the great organ of synthesis; it is the antithesis which makes light."

Hence our distinction between humanity, nature, and the supernatural; in reality, however, they are three identities and what is common to one is common to the other. What is humanity? It is that part of nature which escapes our organs. And what is the supernatural? It is that part of nature which escapes our organs. The supernatural is nature at an excessive distance. Between observation which concerns man and intuition which concerns the supernatural, there is the same difference as between seeing and sounding.

To explain nature however is in no sense to limit it; classification and negation are two things. There is no need of

too much affirmation or too much negation. Idolatry is the centripetal force; nihilism is centrifugal force. The equilibrium of these two forces is philosophy.

Strange fact: idolatry and nihilism agree on one point, the limitation of nature.

Religions, at the slightly advanced epoch of the human race at which we have arrived, are still in low estate. Let us not be deceived: to believe is knowledge as well as thirst. We believe by instinct, then we believe by logic. Religions forming part of civilization, there is for religions as for everything else the infancy of art. And this word is here used in good faith. At the present hour religions are lacking in knowledge. They have created God. Do not bring to them new light; their God is chained. They desire no other. Every religion is like the Abbé Vertot. It is too late, my God is made.

Hence a singular result. In religions what constitutes the defect is the very essence of faith, the sentiment of the infinite. What is lacking in religions is relig-

ion. The illimitable is the whole of religion. Faith is the indefinite in the infinite. Now, we insist, in humanity as now constituted the characteristic of religions is the absence of the infinite.

They talk of heaven but they make of it a temple, a palace, a city. It is called Olympus, it is called Sion. Heaven has towers, heaven has domes, heaven has gardens, heaven has staircases, heaven has a gate and a porter. The bunch of keys is confided by Brahma to Bhâwany, by Allah to Abou-Bekr, and by Jehovah to Saint Peter. On the Acroceraunian volcanoes Demogorgon takes a handful of molten mud and throws it in the air; that makes the stars. Heaven is a mountain, heaven is a crystal; the earth is the center of the universe; Joshua arrests the sun, Circe makes the moon draw back; the Milky Way is a stain of milk-drops; the stars fall.

With regard to this Being, the Eternal, the Uncreated, the Perfect, the Powerful, the Immanent, the Permanent, the Absolute—he is an old man with a white beard,

he is a youth with a nimbus; he is father, he is son, he is man, he is animal; an ox with some, a lamb with others, sometimes a dove, sometimes an elephant. He has a mouth, eyes, ears; his face has been seen. With regard to his faculties, they are conceded to be infinite, but as we have just recalled, they have given him but three, witholding the infinitude accorded as regards extent, and without perceiving that if an absolute being has a name it is not Trinity but Infinity. This Being is irritable; he is passionate, he is jealous, he revenges himself, he is fatigued, he rests, he has need of a Sunday. He lives in a place, he is here and not there. He is the God of armies, he is the God of the English, but not of the French; he is the God of the French, but not of the Austrians. He has a mother. There are kings who promise to Notre Dame of Embrun a tiara of vermilion for fear that she may be angry because of the robe of gold brocade that they have offered to Notre Dame of Tours. He has a form; they chisel him, they paint him, they gild him,

they enrich him with diamonds. They swallow him, they drink him. They surround him with a frontier of dogmas. Each cult places him in a book; he is prohibited from going elsewhere. The Talmud is his sheath, the Zend-Avesta is his case, the Koran is his scabbard, the Bible is his box. He has clasps. The priests keep him under cover. They alone have the right to touch him. From time to time they take him in their hands and let him be seen.

Behold what has become of the illimitable. Infinite radiance is not easy to manipulate. Therefore put the sun in an ostensorium.

God, incomprehensible to the learned, is unintelligible to the ignorant. The infinite having an I—this is no trivial thing for the imagination. This metaphysical notion is an excessive load for the human intelligence. To make faith easier is the endeavor of religions; this is obtained at the expense of the ideal. To administer God, such is the problem to be solved. Paganism divides God into deities,

Christianity divides him into sacraments. Religions are God given to man in mouthfuls.

The Soul of the Universe—make this prodigious abstraction comprehensible to the gross ignorant crowd, luckily for you ignorant. A Jupiter in marble or a Sabaoth in bronze may be seen. (False truth which is at the same time the point of departure of idolatry and the point of departure of atheism.) Fashion therefore a statue of some kind; once the statue has become an idol, once the pedestal has become an altar, give the example by prostrating yourself. There remains but one thing to do, one more step to take, to persuade this mass of honest men that this stone or this copper is the Eternal and the Infinite. Slight affair. To convince the crowd it suffices to frighten it. A miracle or two does the work.

Nothing then outside the Vedas, nothing outside the Toldos-Jeschut, nothing outside of Genesis, nothing outside of the doctors, nothing outside of the prophets, nothing outside of the evangelists;

and if God overpasses these bounds let him be pruned.

It is in the name of Moses that Bellarmin thunderstrikes Galileo; and this great vulgarizer of the great seeker Copernicus, Galileo, the old man of truth, the magian of the heavens, was reduced to repeating on his knees word for word after the inquisitor this formula of shame: "*Corde sincera et fide non ficta, abjuro, maledico et detestor supradictos errores et hereses.*" Falsehood put an ass's hood on science.

Galileo bowed before orthodoxy; but not so Campanella. The inquisition sent Campanella to prison for twenty years, questioned him seven times, each time applying the torture which lasted twenty-four hours. What was his crime? To have affirmed that the number of the stars is infinite. Thus religions are come to this, that in their sight infinity is a crime.

In the eyes of nihilism infinity is not a crime; it is ridiculous. We have heard quite recently in the hall of the Academy this characteristic speech: "Let us pause

or we shall fall into the puerilities of the infinite." And also this: "That is not serious, it concerns religion."

Here, then, is science, at least a certain academic and official science, as myopic as idolatry. State science gives the reply to state religion. It also recoils before the infinite. There is nothing displeasing to the master in these shrinkages. When there are senates, this science is of them. To make the universe a substance and lump, to make of the grand Whole a simple aggregation of molecules without any admixture of moral ingredient, and consequently to conclude from this that force is right, a thing that involves this further consequence that pleasure is duty, to foreshorten man to a beast, to deprive him of all nobility by curtailing him of his soul, to make him a thing like any other—this suppresses outright many declarations on the dignity of man, human liberty, human inviolability, the human mind, etc., and makes this lump of matter more manageable. Authority here below, the false, gains all that has been lost by

authority on high, the true. The more of the infinite, the more of the ideal; the more of the ideal, the more progress; the more progress, the more movement. Immobility therefore. Statu quo, a stagnant pond; such is the order.

There is putrefaction in this order. Man should be like the living waters. Wonderful fact, liberty is health. A rustling, a murmur, a slope, a course, an aim, a will: no life without these. Otherwise corruption is imminent. You will become fetid, and you will give others your plague. Despotism is miasmatic. To deliver ones' self is to disinfect one's self. To go forward is healthseeking. There are, none the less, people who carry the taste for tranquillity to excess, civilizations that resemble the surface of a swamp.

The soul in man is inquietude.

The infinite outside of man is an appeal.

The infinite opens, the soul enters. This entrance is advance, this entrance is flight, this entrance is brooding. What does this mean? Disorder. Ask the cage

what it thinks of the wing. The cage will reply: the wing is rebellion.

To destroy the soul is to cut away the wings. To destroy the infinite is to suppress the field. Tranquillity is reestablished.

If there be nothing more in man than in the beast pronounce without laughing these words: rights of man and citizen. The words: rights of the ox, rights of the ass, rights of the oyster will have the same sound.

It is but a small thing that despots hope for.

Academic science, state science does them this service and does it in good faith in our opinion. It does not deceive, it is mistaken. Their view of things is base, not their hearts. Moreover, let us try to enlighten them. This science takes smallness for exactness. It is timid by temperament, it takes fright easily. It does not go willingly toward discovery. The infinite, what a voyage to undertake! As soon as the figure eight is overthrown it stops short. It passes for algebra, but

algebra is not the whole of science. Every problem would be sounded. Why decline investigation?

One day in 1827, at the time they were talking a great deal about "the fossil man of the forest of Fontainebleau," I was visiting Cuvier at the Jardin des Plantes, and there took place this dialog between us:

"Monsieur Cuvier, what do you think of the fossil man?"

"That it does not exist."

"Have you been to see it?"

"No."

"Shall you go?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it does not exist."

"But if perchance it did exist?"

"It can not exist."

What in 1827 was called "the man fossil" was in fact a queer piece of sandstone with the contours of a human form. Cuvier seemed in the right. He was wrong. The fossil man exists. Thirty-six years after my conversation with

Cuvier, in 1863, in the Moulin-Quignon quarry, near Abbeville, thirty meters above the level of the sea, on a plateau which dominates the valley of the Somme, of the thickness of a bank of clayey sand of the lower diluvium resting on white chalk, there was extracted a fossil human jawbone bearing a single tooth set backward obliquely in the manner that characterizes the prognathous inferior races, and which thus displeased Genesis by confirming the hypothesis of many Adams. To-day the fossil man has issued out from the shadow, altho he was forbidden to do so by competent authority. The Deluge had a fancy to be disagreeable to M. Cuvier, Councilor of State.

It is academic and official science which, for the sake of haste and in order to do away with all that part of nature which does not fall under our senses and consequently disconcerts observation, has invented the word *supernatural.*

This word we ourselves adopt. It is useful for purposes of distinction. We have already made use of it, and we shall

make use of it again; but properly speaking and to be rigorous in the use of language, let us say it once for all, this is an empty word.

There is no supernatural, there is only nature.

Nature alone exists and contains all. All is. There is the part of nature that we perceive, and the part of nature that we do not perceive. Pan on one side visible and on the other side invisible. Because you disdainfully fling this word *supernaturalism* at this invisible side, does it exist the less? X remains X. The Unknown is proof against our vocabulary. To deny is not to destroy. The supernatural is immanent. That which we perceive of nature is infinitesimal. Prodigious and multiple existence vanishes in an instant from earthly sight; but why not pursue it a little?

All these things, spiritism, somnambulism, catalepsy, convulsions, second sight, turning or speaking tables, invisible knockers, burial alive in India, fire-eaters, serpent charmers, etc., so easy to mock at,

should be examined from the point of view of reality. There is perhaps in all this a certain amount of phenomena of which a glimpse has been caught.

If you abandon these facts, beware; charlatans will light upon them, also the imbecile. There is no mean: science, or ignorance. If science does not want these facts, ignorance will take them up. You have refused to enlarge human intelligence, you augment human stupidity. When Laplace withdraws Cagliostro appears.

By what right, moreover, do you say to a fact, be off with you? By what right do you show nature the door? *Huc usque recurret.* Science can commit iniquities. To close one's eyes is a bad act. The telescope has a function; the microscope has duties. The alembic should be honest, the crucible burns for the whole world. Figures must be honest. A denial of experiment is a denial of justice.

And do you know what happens? Absurdity stamps itself upon truth, and it is your fault. You have failed in your ob-

ligation to two laws, good will and watchfulness; you have established empiricism. What should have been astronomy becomes astrology; what should have been chemistry becomes alchemy. Upon Lavoisier who shrinks Hermes swells.

You laugh at Cardan when he says: "A comet near Saturn announces the plague, near Jupiter the death of the pope, near the moon a flood, near Venus the death of the king." And withal it is you who have made Cardan a dreamer. Without the persecutions of that Scaliger whom David Pareus calls *Eriticus superciliosissimus,* without the imprisonment of Bologna, Cardan who incontestably has established the theory of equations of the third degree, Cardan who found the law of the cube, Cardan, equal at least to Tartaglia and whose six tomes in folio are more full of truth than of illusion, would be perhaps the greatest of astronomers and geometers.

Thaumaturgy, the philosopher's stone, transmutation, potable gold, Mesmer's tub, all this false science desired no

less than to be true. You did not wish to see the face of the Unknown; you shall see its mask. Black magic and white, sorcery, chiromancy, cartomancy, necromancy, all this is nothing less than science misled, fallen into chimera for lack of responsibility. What we unjustly banish outside the realm of thought takes refuge in the dream.

Because a fact seems strange to you, you conclude that it is not one. This is bold: the mandarins alone have this sort of valor. All science, however, commences by being strange. Science is successive. It goes from one wonder to another. It mounts by a ladder. The science of to-day would seem extravagant to the science of a former time. Ptolemy would believe Newton mad. I represent to myself the micographer of Delft coming to tell the philosopher of Stagyra about the twenty-seven thousand facets of a fly's eye; do you see the face that Aristotle would make at Leuwenhoëck?

It is rash for one to say: this is puerile; this is not serious. What is puerile is

to imagine that in putting a bandage over one's eyes in the presence of the Unknown one is suppressing the Unknown.

What is not serious is science sneering at the infinite. People have come to the point of wanting to see everything and touch everything, like idolaters. We have already noted this singular coincidence. Induction and intuition are held in suspicion. Induction, the great organ of logic; intuition, the great organ of conscience. To admit the visible and the palpable alone is the condition of observation. This is elimination and nothing else. And who knows? it may be elimination of reality.

Moreover, it is labor lost. It is vain for you to thicken possible science with voluntary ignorance; the force of things, that sublime travail of the submerged third urges human knowledge forward. Mingled with it all is chance, the pointing finger of Providence. An apple falls in front of Newton, a pot boils before Papin, a flaming sheet of paper floats before the eyes of Montgolfier. At intervals a dis-

covery bursts forth like a mine explosion in the deeps of science, and a whole ledge of prejudice crumbles, and the living rock of truth is suddenly laid bare.

Supernaturalism! And they think they have said all. It is curious to retrace our steps, to cast a glance backward. For a long time electricity was part of the supernatural. There were needed the multiplied experiments of Clairaut to have it admitted and inscribed in the government registers of correct science. To-day electricity is installed on street roofs, and endows professorships. Galvanism has passed through the same stage; at first it was bemocked and treated as childishness, as is attested by the five memoirs addrest by Galvani to Spallanzani; it is only very lately that it has been given recognition. Volta's pile was wildly jeered at. Even as yet magnetism has made only a half entrance; half of it is in official science and the other half in the supernatural. The steamboat was "childish" in 1816. The electric telegraph began by being not "serious."

Let us speak out—for there is no favoritism in these pages, and we are in the service of truth alone—in our time there is a certain scientific spirit which is not less narrow than the religious spirit. Error takes on a new skin, but remains error; it was fetishism, it becomes idolatry; it was atheism, it becomes nihilism. How much progress has yet to be accomplished! The two ruts, the rut of error and the rut of imposture are agreed to upset truth.

To sum up all, let it be known that science and religion are two identical words. The learned do not suspect this, no more do the religious. These two words express the two sides of the same fact, which is the infinite. Religion—Science, this is the future of the human mind.

One of the routes to arrive at this is intuition.

We do not develop this. Time is lacking us in these rapid pages. Our real aim is literary and not scientific. Let us pass on.

II

First step, second step, third step. Observation, imagination, intuition. Humanity, nature, the supernatural. We have here the three horizons. One completes and corrects the other; their coordination is the cosmic whole. He who sees all three is at the summit. He is the cubic mind. He is the genius.

Observation gives Sedaine. Observation plus imagination gives Molière. Observation plus imagination plus intuition gives Shakespeare. To mount to the plane of Elsinore and to behold the ghost, there is needed intuition.

These three faculties augment one another and combine. The observation of Molière is more profound than the observation of Sedaine because Molière surpasses Sedaine in imagination. The observation and imagination of Shakespeare pierce further ahead and mount higher than the observation and imagination of Molière because Shakespeare surpasses Molière in intuition.

Compare Shakespeare and Molière in their analogous creations, compare Shylock to Harpagon and Richard III. to Tartuffe, and see what the highest and most comprehensive philosophy can do! Shakespeare sees life as an entire whole. He is in the zenith. Nothing escapes this culminating vision. His eyeball is on high but his glance searches the depths. He is tragedy and comedy at the same time. His tears thunderstrike. His laughter bleeds.

Try another confrontation still more striking. Place the statue of the Commander before the ghost of Hamlet. Molière does not believe in his statue. Shakespeare does believe in his ghost. Shakespeare has intuition, which is lacking in Molière. The statue of the Commander, that masterpiece of Spanish terror, tho original and sinister, is a very different creation from the fantom of Elsinore. Behind the frightful soupeur of marble one sees the smile of Poquelin; the poet, ironical over his prodigy, empties and destroys him; it was a ghost, it is

a mannikin. One of the most formidable inventions of tragedy that has ever appeared upon the stage miscarries, and there is at the banquet of Pierre so little of horror and so little of hell that one would willingly take a seat between Don Juan and the statue.

Shakespeare, with less, does much more. Why? Because he does not lie; because he is the first to be seized by his own creation. He is his own prisoner. He shivers at his fantom and makes you shiver at it. It exists, it is real, it is incontestable, this black figure which rises up with its scepter of command. This ghost is of flesh and bone; flesh of night and bone of the sepulcher. All nature is convinced, is terrible around it. The moon, her pale face half hidden below the horizon, hardly dares to look upon it.

Contrarily, place Shakespeare side by side with Æschylus: the meeting is formidable even for Shakespeare. It is lion against lion. You confront two equals. Orestes' life is not less dismal than Hamlet's. And if Shakespeare essays to

frighten Æschylus with the witches, Æschylus shows him with his finger the Eumenides.

Wonderful fact, genius, to be complete, must be in good faith. Vergil does not believe a word of the Æneid; his Venus is copied from Livy, his Olympus is at second hand, in his own artificial hell he is misled by another, he is surer of Cæsar than of Jupiter; Augustus, Mecænas, Marcellus, these are the actual and real Apollos; profitable deifications are open to suspicion; the name of his muse is Ten Thousand Sesterces. Further, Vergil has almost as much wit as Ovid who, for the rest, was none the less banished from court.

Homer is naïf; the beauty of his poems is in their reality. They are full of it; they overflow with it. Homer believes in heroes, in monsters, in the apple, in the quiver of rays darting the plague, in the division of the gods because of Troy, in Venus who is for, in Pallas who is against; all the fabulous empyrean which is in him fascinates and subjugates

him. He dotes upon it, he makes tiresome repetitions of it. This makes Horace smile. *Bonus Homerus.* Intuition, invention. Intuition dominates not less the inventive geometer than the poet. Intuition is power. It makes the man of brass. It was by intuition and not by observation that Campanella affirmed the infinite number of the stars. The church which hates the stars, awkward for dogma, wished him to give up his opinion. In vain. Intuition was stronger than torture.

To the three faculties indicated above and whose coupling we have first pointed out, then their grouping, correspond three families of minds: moralists, limited to man; philosophers, who combine man with the sensible world; geniuses, who see all.

To understand what is wanting in Molière, it is necessary to read Shakespeare. To understand what is wanting in Sedaine, in the Abbé Prevost, in Marivaux, in Le Sage, in La Bruyère, it is necessary to read Molière.

In art as in all things a certain nuance

—an abyss—separates excellence from greatness. At the Trippenhausen in Amsterdam, you see upon entering a great picture by a master whose name escapes me; it is excellent. You applaud. Turn round, that is the Night Watch, it is Rembrandt. You utter a cry. There is greatness. Excellence has vanished. You can not even look again at the other painting. Greatness in the arts is only obtained at the cost of a kind of adventure. The conquered ideal is the prize of audacity. He who risks nothing gets nothing. The genius is a hero.

Forward! It is the word of Jason and of Columbus. *Arcana naturæ detecta,* this was the cry of that profound seeker Leuwenhoëck, accused by his contemporaries of a *lack of taste in his discoveries.* Leuwenhoëck sought the germ in the visible order as we seek the cause in the invisible order. He augmented the microscope by the hypothesis, trusting in observation, trusting also in intuition. Hence his discoveries, hence also his enemies. Supposition—that is to say, the ascent to the

invisible stage—tempts the great calculating genius as it does the great lyric genius. The lever of conjecture alone can move that incommensurable world, the possible. On condition, it is true, that it has a fulcrum, fact. Kepler was wont to say: "*Hypothesis is my right arm.*"

Without intuition, no great science, no great poetry. Urania, the twin muse, sees at the same time the concrete and the ideal. She places one hand on Archimedes and the other on Homer.

Partial views have only exactness and smallness. The microscope is great because it seeks the germ. The telescope is great because it seeks the center. All that is not that is nomenclature, vain curiosity, trivial art, foolish science, dust. Let us always tend toward synthesis. To see man truly, it is necessary to look at nature; to see nature and man thoroughly, it is necessary to contemplate the infinite. Detail is nothing; the whole is all. To him who never questions, nothing is revealed.

III

Let us be more precise, and at the same time let us give the ideas herein sketched their complete extension.

The idea of nature sums up all. From the more or less obscurity of this immeasurable conception results the whole of philosophy.

Focus this idea at the closest range, make it immediate and palpable, reduce it to the least possible volume while conserving all that it contains, bring it, in a word, to the concrete state, and you have men; expand it, and you perceive God. Humanity being a microcosm, one conceives the error of those who, like Fichte, are contented with it and who see the world in it. Man is God in small volume.

But to take man for God is the same mistake as to take the universe for the earth. You put the grain of dust so near your eyeball that it eclipses the infinite.

Things are the pores whence issues God. The universe suspires Him. All the

deeps reveal Him at every surface. Whoever meditates sees God impearling creation. Religion is the mysterious sweat of the infinite. Nature invites the notion of God. Contemplation is revelation; to suffer is also one. God falls drop by drop from heaven, and tear by tear from our eyes.

To what good is the All, if He be not the end?

The end—that is to say, the aim.

We believe that end signifies death. Error. End signifies life.

Earthly existence is nothing else than the slow growth of human existence toward that blossoming of the soul that we call death. It is in the sepulcher that the flower of life opens.

Destiny is an evident result of nature. Now, how is this brought about, by what combination, by what process, by what decomposition of forces, by what mingling of effluvia, by what mighty alchemy? How is the event fused with the element? How can the universal harmony have countershocks, and how is this

countershock fate? A providence is visible; it has as its manifestation equilibrium, which the philosopher calls by a very great name: equity. A fatality is also visible; it has for its manifestation necessity. Equity and necessity; these are the two mysterious faces of the unknown.

But what is that thing that is called chance. Chance is not providence, for it seems to break the equilibrium; it is not fatality, for it has not the stamp of necessity. What is it then? Is it both? Is it the eddying of both? No one can say.

What is certain is that there is but one law. Nature is not one thing and destiny another. There is not an external law and an internal law. The universal phenomenon is refracted from one medium to the other. Hence diverse appearances; hence the different systems of facts, all concordant in the relative, all identical in the absolute. Unity of essence involves unity of substance, unity of substance involves unity of law. This is the true name of Being: All One.

The labyrinth of universal immanence has a double network, the abstract and the concrete; but this double network is in perpetual transfusion; the abstract becomes concrete, reality becomes abstract, the palpable becomes the invisible, the invisible becomes the palpable, that which is unthinkable is born from what we see and touch, what merely vegetates is complicated with what happens, the incident puts a bridle on the permanent; there is destiny in the tree, there is sap in passion; it is possible that light thinks. The world is a Volta's Pile and at the same time a soul. The Nile and the Ens approach and pair; between the material and the immaterial, fecundation is possible; they are the two sexes of the infinite; there are no boundaries; all mingle and live; flux and reflux of the prodigy within the prodigy; mystery, immensity, life.

O destiny! O creation!

The mother weeps, the infant cries, the wild beast groans or roars, which is groaning, the tree shivers, the grass shudders, the cloud growls, the mountain

quakes, the forest murmurs, the wind complains, the spring sheds tears, the sea sobs, the bird sings. We are born, it is to suffer; we live, it is to suffer; we work, this is to suffer; one is beautiful, this is to suffer; one is just, this is to suffer; one is great, this is to suffer. Desire tends to adjournment, Utopia; knowledge verges upon doubt, hypothesis. We climb that which we shall not scale, we commence that which we shall not complete, we believe that which we shall not prove, we build that which shall not shelter us, we plant that which shall give another shade. Progress is a series of Chananns ever beheld afar, never attained, by them that dream; those that have denied their existence enter therein. Of fruition, there is none for anyone. Tyranny weighs upon the tyrant; goodness is bitter for the good. Ingratitude, what dregs of the chalice! Nothing adapts itself to us; one never makes a complete entrance into a place; one does not recognize his mold in any of the hollows of life; one always has too much or too little; every country is

an exile, every exile is a country; Elsewhere always seems preferable to Here; our greatest plenitudes are the void.

Only one kind of serenity is possible, that of conscience. There are clouds over all the remainder. Majestic obscurity!

And wherefore be astonished and complain, and what do you demand, death being the debt of mankind!

What then is wanting?

That which is certain—and what hope there is in such certitude—that which is certain is that a grandiose phenomenon, liberty, commences with man on earth. To speak in the vigorous language of philosophy and to withhold vague possibilities, let us assert that it is in man alone that this phenomenon begins to be visible. Man alone on earth seems free. All that is not man, whether it be animal or matter, is fatal. This at least is what appears to be incontestable.

Let us open a parenthesis:

The discovery of another law situated farther off in the depths and explaining the fatal appearance of animal and thing

is given to intuition alone. This law, which moreover we personally believe in, is so little comprehended that not a single lineament of it has been scientifically fixt. Not even the name of hypothesis, which is the beginning of recognition, has been granted it by science, so deeply immersed in chimera is this law as yet. Does it exist? A problem. The boldest limit themselves to saying: there is something there.

We close the parenthesis, we do not wish that our reason should miss its foothold for an instant, and we declare that we are now holding to facts perceptible to all; we are reasoning on the palpable and the visible; we rely upon the universally admitted data of philosophical experience.

This posited, what has man upon this earth more than other beings?

The power of doing good or evil.

In him is initiated this faculty and consequently this notion: good and evil.

Good and evil, what a prospect upon the unknown!

Revelation of the moral law.

Power to do good and evil, what is that? It is liberty. And what more is it? It is responsibility. Liberty here, responsibility elsewhere. Splendid discovery!

Liberty is the soul!

Liberty implies resurrection, for resurrection is responsibility. To accomplish its law—that is to say, to become responsible liberty—it is absolutely necessary that after life this phenomenon, which is man himself, should persist. Therefore, and irresistibly, behold the survival of the soul demonstrated.

Here we come upon sacred darkness.

In this labyrinth the guiding thread is the moral law.

I feel warmth. I advance, this is goodness; I feel cold, I recoil, this is evil. The nearness of God to my soul manifests itself by an ineffable, obscure caress, as I approach Him. I think, I feel Him near me; I believe, I feel Him nearer; I love, I feel Him nearer still; I consecrate myself to Him, I feel Him nearest of all.

This is not observation, for I see and touch nothing; nor imagination, for then

virtue would be imaginary; it is intuition.

All the roots of the moral law are in what I have called the supernatural. To deny the supernatural is not merely to close one's eyes to the infinite: it is to cut the ground from under all human virtue. Heroism is religious affirmation. Whosoever sacrifices himself proves eternity. No finite thing contains the explanation of sacrifice.

He who writes these lines already has said somewhere that the ideal on earth, the infinite beyond earth, are the double goal and at the same time the unique goal: for one leads man toward progress and the other leads the soul to God.

One may, in downright fact, be of an ironical and tranquil cast, believe in nothing and lay down this life proudly. Petronius, man of pleasure, does his utmost to die voluptuously. He settles himself in a tepid bath, rereads Nero's order, recites some love verses—then takes up a knife and cuts his four veins; this done, he watches his blood flow, distends a

gashed vein with his fingers, then another, stanches them, reopens them, now the right arm, now the left, laughing the while to his friends: *Amant alterna camenæ.* Surely this is a superb attitude with which to front the darkness; but it is a good exit rather than a good death.

To die well is to die like Leonidas for the fatherland, like Socrates for philosophy, like Jesus for fraternity. Socrates died for knowledge and Jesus for love; there is nothing more grand or more sweet. Happy those whose death is beautiful! The soul, momentarily distrained in man here below but conscious of a destiny solidary with the universe, owes itself the satisfaction of being able to associate the idea of beauty with the idea of death—vague proof of a future which satisfies the soul confusedly.

That these are abstruse meditations, who shall deny? But what noble mind has not been tempted by them. That sort of abyss within us hears the call of the abyss beyond us. The intellect loves these darknesses; according to the greatness of

the soul that dreams, the visual ray of thought pierces the diverse profundities. The attempt to comprehend—therein is the whole of philosophy. Creation is a palimpsest through which one deciphers God. The grand obscure unveils itself but would be pursued. Enigma, that formidable Galatea, flees under the prodigious branches of universal life, but she looks back at you and desires to be seen.

This sublime desire of the impenetrable to be penetrated, causes in you the dawn of prayer.

By degrees the horizon appears, and meditation becomes contemplation; then it is troubled, and contemplation becomes vision. We behold the whirlpool of the hypothetic and the real, what may be complicating what is, our invention of the possible making us illusion to ourselves, our proper conceptions mingled with obscurity, our conjectures, our dreams and our aspirations taking form, all the chimeras of doubt, the vague possible, apparitions of souls in lightning flashes, rapid flights of shrouds, sweet beloved

faces sketched in inexpressible transparencies, fugitive smiles in the night, the prodigious dream of the immanent beheld,—what dizziness! The apocalypses issue thence.

You may suppress all this for the philosopher, but you shall not suppress it for the poet. From Job to Voltaire, every poet has his share of vision. A certain sidereal grandeur is bound up in this madness. In this august dementia there is revelation. To be this possible visionary and withal remain the sage—it is by this superhuman faculty that we recognize supreme minds.

We certainly are not of those who insist absolutely upon finding the poet in person in the types of his dramas and who make him responsible for all that his characters say; which would be to reduce to a lyric and monochordal I the multiple and undefined I of the dramatic author; but without making the poet an integral part of his creations, drunk with Falstaff, hypocrite with Tartuffe, intriguer with Figaro, fratricide with Cain, without

canonizing Corneille on account of Polyeucte, without idealizing Schiller for the sake of Posa and without caricaturing Homer on account of Thersites—while wholly rejecting that easy, puerile fashion of seizing a man red-handed in his work—we think that at times one can see, by fits and starts, glimmerings of the poet's very soul. At certain moments one can say: This is a spark of Plautus; that is a lightning flash of Æschylus. The author incarnates himself a little more in such a character than in all the others. It is evident, for example, that Hamlet is a predilection with Shakespeare, just as Alceste is a predilection with Molière; and one may affirm that it is Shakespeare who speaks when Hamlet says: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Vast anxiety of the possible, such is the perpetual obsession of the poet. What may be in nature, what may be in destiny: prodigious night.

Evening twilight at the refreshing approach of the rising tide. The eye is lost in all those furrows obedient to the wind; below the wave, on high the cloud, the foam lash in the face: sloops frightened by the gaping billows are beating their wings, while the rushing waves are full of the strangled howlings of the shipwrecked—look upon the ocean. What is that compared to this: look upon the possible!

At rare moments I think with profound joy that before a dozen or fifteen years, at most, I shall know what that darkness is—the tomb; and I feel with a sort of certainty that my hope of light will not be disappointed.

O you whom I love, be not troubled by the cry that I send to the supreme goal, do not grieve at this impatience, for I have faith that the infinite is the great trysting-place. There I shall find you radiant, and you shall behold me purified. And we shall love one another as upon earth, and at the same time as in heaven, with the mystical increase of the immensities.

Life is but a chance encounter; after death comes union. Bodies embrace but momentarily, souls lastingly. Figure to yourselves, O my well beloved, that divine kiss of azure when of the ego there is nothing but light! Transfigured love is a part of what we call the day. Union is radiance. Who knows whether all our celestial passion for duty and virtue does not come from their ineffable brightness, whether they do not render us the service of making us good in being happy, and whether their sublime law is not to be useful because they are beloved.

Let us endeavor to be one day among them. And here below, until the striking of the great hour—you and I, especially I who am so shackled by imperfection and have so much to do to attain goodness—let us not rest, let us work, let us watch over ourselves and over others, expend ourselves for probity, be lavish of ourselves for justice, sacrifice ourselves for truth, without counting what we lose; for what we lose we gain. No relaxing. Do according to our strength and beyond our

strength. Where is there duty? where is there struggle? where is there exile? where is there pain? Hasten thither. To love is to give; let us love. Be of profound good will. Think of that immense good that awaits you, death.

Thoughts

I

O WRITERS, my contemporaries, you who were born with the century, and you who are the younger, living future of France, I greet you and I love you.

The writers and the poets of this century have this amazing advantage—that they proceed from no ancient school, from no second hand, from no model; they are at first hand. They have no ancestors, and they no more proceed from Dante than from Homer, no more from Shakespeare than from Æschylus. The poets of the nineteenth century, the writers of the nineteenth century, are the sons of the French Revolution.

This volcano has two craters, "89" and "93." Hence two streams of lava. This double stream also is found in thought.

All contemporary art results directly,

and without intermediary, from this formidable genesis. No poet anterior to the nineteenth century, great as that is, is the nineteenth century's ancestor. We have no man at our roots, but we have humanity.

If you absolutely insist upon connecting the literature of this century with men anterior to our period, search for these men not in literature but in history, and go straight to Danton for the type. But this movement comes from a higher source than men. It comes from ideas. It is the Revolution itself.

* * *

I love all men who think, even those who think otherwise than myself. To think is of itself to be useful; it is always and in all cases a striving toward God.

The differing opinions of writers perhaps have their uses. Who knows? in reality all may be going by different routes toward the same goal. It is well, perhaps, that the routes be different in order that the human race may have more enlighteners. By dint of beating

the bushes of ideas, philosophers, even the most remote, the utterly lost, bring to light some truths.

I wrote this one day to a dreamer, another sort of dreamer than myself, who desired to win me over to his faith, and I added: "I shall follow you with my eyes as you proceed in your path; but I will not leave my own."

* * *

I belong to God as soul, and to humanity as force. But withal, excess in generalization tends toward abstraction in poetry and denationalization in politics.

One ends by adhering no longer to life and by holding no longer to country.

Double quicksand which I try to avoid. I seek the ideal, but always in keeping the foot firmly planted upon reality. I do not wish to lose the earth as poet, nor to lose France as citizen.

* * *

Art exists by right and as naturally as nature.

Art is the special creation of man. Art is the necessary and fatal product of a

limited intelligence, as nature is the necessary and fatal product of an infinite intelligence. Art is to man what nature is to God.

* * *

Poetry contains philosophy as the soul contains reason.

* * *

Logic is the geometry of the intelligence. Logic is essential to thought. But thought is no more the product of logic than a landscape is the product of geometry.

* * *

Intelligence is the wife, imagination is the mistress, memory is the servant.

* * *

When the man of war has satisfied his hunger for heroism he returns home and hangs his sword on a nail. It is not the same with the thinker. Ideas are not to be hung on a nail like swords. When the philosopher, when the poet is resting, his ideas continue the fight. They go forth in the cause of freedom, like sublime mad-

men, to crush false ideas and to move the world.

* * *

The intelligence and the heart are sympathetic regions running parallel; one can not grow larger without the other increasing; if one rises the other mounts to its level.

* * *

In the domain of art there is no light without heat.

* * *

Art has for its result, even when not for its apparent object, the amelioration of man.

A real and mighty bond, tho it often escapes superficial minds, unites the beautiful to the true on one hand, to virtue on the other.

Masterpieces, at times without the participation of their authors' will (O infirmity of genius!) reveal continually, mysteriously, divinely, and, as it were, shed in the surrounding air a pervading and sane morality.

He who passes near them and breathes

their atmosphere is impregnated with their perfume without knowing it. His sole desire was to increase his knowledge: he has become better.

* * *

Civilization is exhaled from art as perfume from the flower.

Would you calculate the civilizing power of art, of pure art, without admixture of human or social motive? Search the bagnio for a man who knows Mozart, Vergil, Raphael, who quotes Horace by heart, who is moved by "Orpheus" or the "Freischütz," who can contemplate a cathedral spire or a statue by Jean Goujon—seek for such a man in all the bagnios of all the civilized countries; you will not find one. To be sensitive to art is to be incapable of crime.

* * *

The literate, the erudite, the learned, mount by means of ladders; poets and artists are birds.

* * *

Do you wish to see at one glance, in a sort of clear abridgment, striking, pro-

found and true, and furnishing the solution simultaneously with the problem, the symbol of many problems, and among others of the literary problem of the age? Behold an oak in springtime: a centuried trunk, old roots, old branches; leaves green, fresh and new. Tradition and novelty, tradition producing novelty, novelty proceeding out of tradition. All is here.

* * *

Every man, even the most vulgar, the most *positive,* as they say nowadays, has need of revery. Even tho it were but for a moment. Even tho it were but a flash. It is a necessity for him. All souls, however, have not the marvelous gift of spontaneous revery. What makes music so general a pleasure to men is the fact that it is revery ready-made. Elect souls love music, but they love still better to create their revery themselves.

* * *

The more thought descends from the heights the more likely it is to evaporate into revery.

A voice cries to the poet: Be the poet of the future, be the man of the generation that shall come after ours, study laws and their abuses, and preoccupy thyself with society. Another voice says to him: Be the poet of the present for all the future generations, be the sempiternal man, contemplate the trees and the stars, and preoccupy thyself with nature.

Which shall he listen to?—Both.

Be the poet of nature and you shall be the poet of mankind.

* * *

Fix your attention upon the masterworks of perfect poets, and this is what you shall find: severe precision in detail and form; in the substance a strange and almost illimitable grandeur which we can not contemplate without discovering at every moment new horizons full of the mysterious radiance of the infinite. This is the true poetry. It is composed of the beautiful and the ideal, and it combines the two. Fusion of almost contrary elements which genius alone can accomplish! Beauty has need of contours; the ideal has need of the infinite.

II

Pain is as diverse as man. One suffers as one can.

* * *

One believes others will do what he will do himself.

* * *

Happiness takes warning by nothing.

* * *

The ox suffers, the cart complains.

* * *

Pride is a lion, egotism is a tiger, vanity is a cat.

* * *

True force is that which has for device: Nothing per force.

* * *

He who is not capable of enduring poverty is not capable of being free.

* * *

Evil. Mistrust those who rejoice at it even more than those who do it.

They say of me that I am a strange man with a taste for the singular. This is true. Every time I think of those words: liberty, greatness, dignity, honor, I prefer the singular to the plural.

* * *

In certain cases there is greatness in allowing one's self to be deceived, and shame in distrust. Jealous man, note this: he who deceives suffers in remorse all that he who is deceived suffers in trust.

* * *

I am not certain whether one ought not to prefer enormity to meanness.

* * *

Many friends are like the sun-dial: they mark the hour only while the sun shines.

* * *

The elephant is scarcely more potent against the ant than the ant against the elephant.

* * *

"You see yonder wall?"
"Yes, General."

"What color is it?"

"White, General."

"I tell you it is black. What color is it?"

"Black, General."

"You are a good soldier."

* * *

Delatouche said to Charles Nodier: "In 1830 I think I killed a Swiss." "Good," replied Nodier, "but do you think the Swiss thought he was killed?"

* * *

Dear God! how beauty varies in nature and art. In a woman the flesh must be like marble; in a statue the marble must be like flesh.

* * *

The wicked envy and hate; it is their way of admiring.

* * *

Envy has a melancholy fascination.

* * *

There are men who commit crime to increase their business. They possess the strange and hideous art of extracting

from atrocious combinations wealth, the easy life of a bourgeois, the flat well-being of a wealthy Prudhomme. Strange and odious thing! to bring coal into hell to make cabbage soup!

* * *

The learned man knows that he is ignorant.

* * *

By putting forward the hands of the clock you shall not advance the hour.

* * *

To allow himself to be calumniated is part of an honest man's strength.

* * *

The able man who is modest is gold silver plated.

* * *

Idleness is the heaviest of all oppressions.

* * *

Full of ennui—that is to say, empty.

One sometimes says: He killed himself because he was bored with life. One

ought rather to say: He killed himself because he was bored by lack of life.

* * *

Doing nothing is happiness for children and misery for old men.

* * *

The honorable man tries to make himself useful, the intriguer to make himself necessary.

* * *

Before increasing outwardly it is necessary to be strengthened inwardly.

* * *

To be perfectly happy it does not suffice to possess happiness, it is necessary to have deserved it.

* * *

To believe, to grow (*croire, croître*).

* * *

One can have reasons for complaint without having the right to complain.

* * *

Stupidity talks, vanity acts.

It is the essence of the beast not to be a sot.

* * *

Virtue has a veil, vice a mask.

* * *

Do not let it be your aim to be something, but to be someone.

* * *

One sees qualities at a distance and defects at close range.

* * *

When you have listened to one's words do not dive too deeply into his motives. You will often find that severity is founded in envy, and indulgence in corruption.

* * *

There is foresight in virtue, not in heroism. Virtue has a species of prosody; heroism is all creation, immediate and spontaneous.

III

HENCEFORTH those of our poets with the prescience of the future in store for our language, our civilization, our initiative, will take into account, not merely the genius of France, but the genius of Europe.

* * *

Style is the substance of the subject called unceasingly to the surface.

* * *

Nature proceeds by contrasts.

It is by means of opposite qualities that it brings its objects into prominence. It is by their contraries that it makes things felt: day by night, heat by cold, etc.; all light throws a shadow. Hence relief, contour, proportion, relation, reality. Creation, life, destiny, are for man an immense chiaroscuro.

The poet, that philosopher of the concrete and that painter of the abstract—the poet, that supreme thinker, should do as nature does: proceed by contrasts.

Whether he paint the human heart, whether he paint the exterior world, he should everywhere oppose shadow to light, invisible truth to visible reality, spirit to matter, matter to spirit; he should render the whole which is creation, intelligible to the part which is man, accomplishing this as much by the rude shock of contrasts as by the harmonious intermingling of delicate shades of difference. This perpetual confrontation of things with their contraries is, for poetry as for all creation, life itself.

* * *

When we say: That is poetry, you say: It is nothing more than color. Poor people! The sun himself is only a colorist.

* * *

There is an intimate agreement between language and climate. The sun produces vowels as it produces flowers; the north bristles with consonants as with ice and rocks. An equilibrium of consonants and vowels is established in intermediate languages which are born of tem-

perate climates. This is one of the causes of the domination of the French idiom. An idiom of the North, German for example, could not become the universal language; it contains too many consonants, and these would not melt in the soft mouths of the South. A meridional idiom, Italian for instance, could not adapt itself to all nations; its numerous vowels which can hardly be contained by the words would vanish in the rude pronunciations of the North. French, on the contrary, which leans on consonants without being hurt by them, and is sweetened without being cloyed by vowels, is compounded in such fashion that all human tongues may adopt it. Therefore, I could say, and may here repeat, that it is not merely France that speaks French; it is civilization.

In examining language from the viewpoint of music, and in reflecting on those mysterious reasons of things contained in the etymology of words, we arrive at this conclusion: that each word, taken by

itself, is like a little orchestra in which the vowel is the voice, *vox,* and the consonant the instrument, the accompaniment, *sonat cum.*

Striking detail, which shows in what vivid fashion a truth once found causes all the others to issue forth from the shadows: instrumental music is peculiar to the countries of consonants—that is to say, the North, and vocal music to the countries of vowels—that is to say, the South. Germany, land of harmony, has symphonists; Italy, land of melody, has singers. Thus, the North, the consonant, the instrument, harmony; four things that logically and necessarily engender one another, and to which four other parallel things correspond: the South, the vowel, the song, melody.

What is it that issues from the sea, from the forest, from the hurricane? harmony. And from the bird? melody.

* * *

One is never too concise. Concision is the marrow. There is in Tacitus an august obscurity.

Concision in style, precision in thought, decision in life.

* * *

Accept upon occasion the crude word, reject the foul word. Avoid these two quicksands: the improper word, the malproper word.

* * *

"*Gushing with gems*" (*ruisselant de pierreries*), that metaphor which I used in the "*Orientales,*" was immediately adopted. To-day it is part of the current and banal style, so much so that I have been tempted to erase it from the "*Orientales.*" I remember the effect that it produced upon painters. Louis Boulanger, to whom I read *Lazzara,* made a picture of it on the spot.

This immediate vulgarization pertains to all strenuous metaphors. All true and vivid images become popular and attain a universal circulation. For example: "to run with the belly earthward" (*ventre à terre*), to be "inflamed with anger," "to burst one's buttons with laughing" (*rire à ventre déboutonné*), "to fire a red bul-

let" (to swear), "to be at knives drawn," "he hangs his legs around his neck," etc.; all admirable figures once, now commonplace.

* * *

April 16, 1863.

I read, to-day, Lamartine's study on "Les Misérables." It might be called "A Swan's Attempt to Bite."

* * *

Prose and verse are but the material of which the poet, founder and chiseler, makes use of to embody his ideas. Verse is marble, prose is brass.

Admirable material: wax for the creative artist, granite for posterity; moreover one is as precious as the other as regards thought; the metal of Corinth is the equal of the stone of Carrara. Tacitus is the equal of Vergil.

Nevertheless, verse has more chance of enduring than prose, because it is more difficult to vulgarize it and it is never melted into current coin. You can not make pennies out of a marble statue; they may be made, however, from a statue of bronze.

There are subjects which may be treated indifferently in prose or in verse, cut from the block or molded in the furnace. Such are those wherein are mingled in certain proportion the human and the divine, the ideal and the real. There are other ideas which imperiously demand white marble, transparent and yearning for verse. Pure beauty desires verse. A Venus in bronze would be a negress.

Dramatic poetry admits prose; lyric poetry excludes it.

The theater is the frontier point of civilization and art; it is the intersecting place of human society with its vices, its prejudices, its blindness, its tendencies, its instincts, its authority, its laws, and its manners; and of human thought, with its liberties, its fantasies, its aspirations, its magnetism, its impulses, and its teachings.

At the theater the poet and the multitude gaze into each other's eyes; sometimes they touch each other, sometimes they insult each other, sometimes they

mix with one another: fecund mingling. On one side a crowd, on the other a soul. That something of a crowd which enters into a soul, that something of the soul which enters into the crowd, is dramatic art in its completeness.

* * *

Lyric genius: to be one's self. Dramatic genius: to be others.

* * *

Poets of the drama put historic men rather than historic facts upon the stage. You are often obliged to make events false, you can always make men true. Write the drama not following, but according to, history.

* * *

There are good creatures who vomit upon Shakespeare. One, in fact, vomits in the ocean. High drama in truth is like the high sea: it makes some shiver with joy and raises the gorge of others; it has the odor and the rolling of the abyss; it makes you seasick. What does that prove against the drama or against the ocean?

There is no monolog in the rôle of Tartuffe; Iago is all monolog. And now construct theories.

* * *

Scenario of Berenice:

ACT I

Titus

ACT II

Reginam Berenicem

ACT III

Invitus

ACT IV

Invitam

ACT V

Dimisit

* * *

In intellectual works, above all in those that require a certain arrangement and a certain construction, dramatic poems for example, there are portions which are destined to grow old, and which grow old. Of such are those forms, ever passing and necessarily a little conventional which relate more particularly to

the reigning taste, to the fashion of the day, to the spirit of the time, useful influences which date a work, and of which true genius can not, ought not and would not entirely deprive it.

One therefore may say of all the productions of the human mind, even of the most sublime, that they *grow old*. Only, when there is in a work neither style nor thought, that work becomes old; when there is in it poetry, philosophy, fine language, human observation, study of nature, inspiration, and grandeur, that work becomes antique.

* * *

The theater is not the country of the real: it has trees of pasteboard, palaces of linen, a heaven of rags, diamonds of glass, tinsel gold, paint on the peach, rouge on the cheek, a sun that issues from under the earth.

The theater is the country of truth: there are human hearts on the stage, human hearts in the greenroom, human hearts in the hall.

IV

Providence often writes in large characters in the destiny of great men.

* * *

Genius: the superhuman in man.

* * *

Great poets and great philosophers, like ordinary minds, have their confused, doubting, and apparently inexplicable sides. Only, in the case of mediocre minds, the vague sides are in effect nothing more than mist, shadow, and obscurity; while with great thinkers they are a mass of sublime and resplendent things, too far off and too heaped up. It is the difference between a cloud and a nebula.

* * *

Briars, thorns, stones, pebbles, cliffs, quagmires: the inconveniences and conditions of great renowns.

What would be ugly in a garden constitutes beauty in a mountain.

* * *

He who has genius has all talents. In order to know how to do anything it is necessary to know how to do all. Qualities are the reverse sides of one another: grace is the other side of strength; shadow is the opposite side of light.

No genius without its two poles; one is a sphere on this condition alone; one is not a star without being a sphere.

* * *

A great artist is a great man in a great child.

* * *

Smallness in a great man seems smaller by its disproportion with all the rest.

* * *

To give shade. A word which applies equally to great trees and to great men.

* * *

He who has glory is at war (*Qui gloire a guerre a*).

Conditions of genius: attackable, inexpugnable.

* * *

Men of genius have never a morrow, but they have eternity.

To lose and then be vindicated, in other words to be wrong the first day and right the second is the history of all great bearers of truth.

* * *

It often happens that men of genius have, in default of religious formulas, a religion of their own, which at times seems a negation of the others.

Great minds, like worlds, appear to sustain and move themselves in the void. But in reality, moving in immense orbits and conditioned by the infinite, they revolve round the center of centers by a mysterious law of gravitation. It is indeed in these majestic exceptions, suns and geniuses, that we may study in the nude the grand law of universal equilibrium which rules the moral and the physical world alike.

A deep well was reflecting the constellated skies and the splendors of infinite space. A child passing along, leans over and dropt into his soul by the first breaks the mirror and effaces the stars.

Such is the thinker. The most vulgar concern of life, picked from the ground and dropt into his soul by the first passer-by, suffices to trouble his contemplation of eternal things. But this trouble is momentary, the stone sinks to the bottom of the well, the care sinks to the bottom of the soul, and the mysterious mirror again reflects the heavens.

Without counting the nineteenth century, France and the world have had three successive cycles of light, and, for myself, I have never accepted that appellation of "great century" given to the least of the three.

* * *

Luther, after having sapped the great Catholic unity at its base, vainly essayed in turn to leave after him a religious unity.

Calvin reigns at Geneva, Zwingli at

Zurich in the Albis Mountains, Brother Martin at Marburg, Bucer at Strasburg, Acolampade at the foot of Hauenstein at Basle, Melanchthon at the University of Wittenberg.

This phenomenon, moreover, reproduces itself under almost the same circumstances in the history of all philosophies and all religions. There comes a moment when the mother-thought, that august piece of gold stamped with the royal image of the master, disappears. A heap of little ideas of leather or of lead struck with the effigy of a crowd of little men gets into circulation among the multitude. We had a philosophy, we have systems; we had a gold sequin, we have small change.

Is this good? Is this evil? Are we to be pitied because in certain proportion the false is ever fatally mingled with the true? Is falsehood essential to truth to make it fit for human use, as alloy is to metal?

I put these questions. Let who can resolve them.

Three is the perfect number.

Unity is to the number three what the diameter is to the circle. Three in numbers is what the circle is in figures.

The number three is the only one that has a center. The other numbers are ellipses with two foci.

From this perfection of the number there arises the following curious law applicable to the number three alone: Add the cipher composing any multiple whatsoever of the number three, the total will always be divisible by three.

* * *

The power of barbarous peoples belongs to their youth and disappears with it.

The power of civilized peoples belongs to their intelligence and develops with it.

There is no example of a barbarous people being at once old and powerful. It becomes civilized or it dies.

In the first case it is Russia; in the second case it is Turkey.

They are spoiling the Orient. There is no longer any Grand Turk. The seraglio is of mahogany. The ideal of the pashas is to resemble our corporals. The mufti is foreshortened into a good-natured man. Abd-el Kader who wrote like Job, writes like Prudhomme. The furred robe makes place for the great-coat. Algiers is going to have a Rue de Rivoli, Delhi has a Strand; Africa is Gallicized, India is Anglicized. You will see that, step by step, with civilization as a pretext, Europe will end by breaking up China.

* * *

A republic like the United States of America, constructed on a single principle, accepts with calm the struggles and shocks of thought under all forms, the most grandiose, the most savage. There all the forms of license of the human mind may without peril execute their formidable dance. The bulls are vast, the elephants are enormous, the lions are gigantic; but the circus is of granite.

John Brown.

The despotism that kills a liberator defends itself; liberty that kills a liberator commits suicide.

* * *

This century fulfils the office of road-laborer for the society of the future. We make the road, others will make the journey.

* * *

We see past time in a telescope and present time in a microscope. Hence the apparent enormities of the present.

* * *

At the present time, when one gulf is exchanged only for another, this is the sum of my politics: I yoke myself forward for the mount and backward for the descent.

This makes superficial minds think I vary.

* * *

1850.

The militant thinker ought to be no more surprized at being popular and unpopular in turn than the sailor in being wet and dry in turn.

To have the truth for star, the right for compass, to accomplish the voyage, save the ship, enter the port, arrive at the goal, this is the whole problem.

* * *

1850.

I like to be popular, this is happiness; but I desire to be useful, this is duty.

Useless and popular or unpopular and useful? my choice should be quickly made. Suffer, but serve.

* * *

1852.

I write with one hand, but I fight with both.

* * *

1860.

Exile commences as a pell-mell and ends as a choice. He who remains in it is better off. Exile sifts.

* * *

Guernsey, 1861.

When I was a peer of France under the monarchy, or a representative of the people under the republic, if anyone had predicted to me that a day would come

when I, Victor Hugo, should be stricken down by a Star Chamber statute of the time of Charles I. and that there would come another day when I should pay as feudal tenant the *droit du poulage* to the Queen of England, I should have smiled at these dreams. These dreams have come true. There is no impossible. Great and small destinies alike ought to be prepared for all. Foresee the unforeseen.

* * *

1862.

Revolutions like volcanoes have their days of flame and their years of smoke.

We are now in the smoke.

* * *

1862.

Ah! those men of all régimes, of all intrigues, of all servitudes, of all despotisms! They have a task, these men, wherever the country has a wound!

* * *

Gaudet equis canibusque. Horace said two thousand years ago that from all time youth has loved horses. Only, the fashion

has changed. Our fathers, the youth of former times, loved horses after the fashion of cavaliers. The young men of to-day love horses after the fashion of grooms.

* * *

1869.

Despotism is a long crime.

V.

CHANGE your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots.

* * *

There are two ways of belonging to no party: like women and children, because one has never investigated them; like thinkers and sages, because one has investigated them all.

* * *

A reaction: a boat which is going against the current but which does not prevent the river from flowing on.

* * *

Really great ministers are those who, while working with the events of their time, are able at need to work with ideas.

* * *

Stagnation, which is identical with death and night, is never mistaken in its enemies. It denounces, persecutes and, if

it can, prevents all movement; for all movement is life and all life is light. Out of hatred and in derision the men of darkness called Harvey *circulator,* which is the same thing as revolutionary.

Harvey had no sooner made the discovery of the circulation of the blood than Luther discovered liberty of conscience. Harvey is a Luther. Luther is a Harvey. They established reality, that is all. Men are so made, or mismade, that whoever among them discovers the law of God is an innovator, and whoever applies it is a revolutionary.

* * *

Year by year as we grow older we put off the old man—that is to say, the young man; certain aspects are modified, the transitory in opinions crumbles away with the evanescent in things, the surface of the soul changes like the surface of the body; human existence is made up of successive dismantlings, and the things of life, like the waves of the ocean, are made and unmade unceasingly. But in the midst of these changes and inevitable al-

terations, the essential must persist; it is well that the individual reality of man is maintained, it is fitting that a certain identity is never called in question. Some part may be in fluid state but something ought to persist. To become otherwise while remaining the same, there lies the whole problem.

* * *

Youth has beautiful traits: it is sincere, faithful, honest, pure, trusting, devoted, loyal, generous, grateful. In growing old try to preserve the virtues of youth, even after you have lost its illusions; become men and remain youths.

It is in accordance with this law that fine natures are developed and great hearts formed. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of true wisdom.

The wise man does not grow old, but ripens.

* * *

An abyss is there, quite close to us.

We poets dream on the brink. So be it. You statesmen sleep there.

The true socialist formula:

To make the moral man better, the intellectual man greater, the material man happier.

Goodness first, greatness next, happiness last.

* * *

The logic of a true idea is so potent that from the moment it is introduced in human affairs, in religion, in politics, in legislation, it reduces all events to pregnant syllogisms, some to demonstrate it, others to fulfil it.

The thinker, when it seems good to him, can display himself as an orator.

* * *

Eloquence as adapted for assemblies should only embody things in the mean. Eloquence embodying extreme opinions can move a crowd or an individual, which in many cases is the same thing. This sort of eloquence is able to act upon an audience for the first time, as being something new, strange and relishing, or it may be temporarily adapted to a given circum-

stance; the second time, however, it fatigues, and the third time it will appear ridiculous.

Habitually to dominate a great assembly requires calculation mingled with inspiration; each time one speaks it is necessary to take account of the resultant of the factions of the assembly and to found one's speech upon this resultant; then one relies not alone upon his isolated strength but upon all the units of strength in this faction; or better yet and a more difficult thing: one ought to take into account the resultant of the whole assembly, appeal in moderate strain to the thought of each, in which case one has as a lever the united strength of the assembly itself. One moves something in each mind. At times one touches the heart of all.

One may also touch this heart, tho occasionally and not at will, by the sole power of individual sentiment and by convincing the conscience, but then one is no longer an orator but a man, which is still more rare.

For the rest it is an error—a gen-

erous one, to think that one may dominate an assembly by ideas from without. An assembly is only moved by what is within that assembly. Nevertheless it is at times a fine thing to try.

VI

THE instincts are the mysterious eyes of the soul.

* * *

The soul has illusions as the bird has wings: it is supported by them.

* * *

In the problem of the immortality of the soul, one sees the why; one does not see the how.

* * *

The thinker asks the new-born: Whence comest thou?—and the dying: Whither goest thou?

All he knows is that the new-born child weeps, and the dying man trembles.

* * *

The material world is based on equilibrium, the moral world on equity.

Equilibrium is the supreme and mysterious law of the grand Whole.

The material world is its visible demonstration.

As an absolute necessity, the moral world is its invisible confirmation.

Without which, these two worlds themselves, these two worlds whose union embraces all, would not be in equilibrium.

* * *

The skeleton of the animal is not much more significant than the first stone that turns up; the skeleton of man is startling. The horrible nature of the reflection is not: this has lived, but this has thought.

* * *

The animal is ignorant of the fact that he knows. The man is aware of the fact that he is ignorant.

* * *

When the sentiment of the infinite enters in a full stream into man, it makes of him a god or a monster, Jesus Christ or Torquemada.

* * *

Conscience is God present in man.

* * *

Prayer is an august avowal of ignorance.

My prayer:

O God! vouchsafe to me of your Infinite all that is possible of light and of love!

What is the highest faculty of the soul?

Is it genius?

No, it is goodness.

* * *

The right of the best is always the strongest.

* * *

When there is nothing in the left breast there can be nothing great in the head. Genius is a great heart.

* * *

Son, brother, father, lover, friend. There is room in the heart for all the affections, as there is room in heaven for all the stars.

* * *

There is one thing that ought to be neither loved, nor caused, nor given: it is pain.

* * *

Never laugh at those who suffer; suffer sometimes those who laugh.

They say: This is an old man; his life has flickered out. And they find it quite simple that he is gone. Ask his children if it is quite simple. This great age, which seems to be an extenuating circumstance for death, has a contrary effect upon those who love. Years of possession seems to them almost to constitute a right; and life no longer wears for us its true aspect when we are deprived of those beings who have always been the light of our eyes.

* * *

Whenever one finds in the depths of his conscience the right to pardon, it is because it is the course of duty.

* * *

I know a thing more beautiful perhaps than innocence; it is indulgence.

* * *

Am I not the first to need indulgence, I, who am speaking? Look you, all the sins that love can make one commit—except dishonorable sins—I have committed.

One loves greatness in his own heart.

Love is a mighty egoism that possesses all the altruisms.

* * *

Angel, provided thou hast all, the rest suffices me.

* * *

They say love is blindness of heart; I say not to love is blindness.

Strange fact, after eighteen centuries of progress intellectual freedom is proclaimed, but not freedom of the heart.

Nevertheless love is one of the great rights of man, as well as thought.

Adultery is nothing else than heresy. If freedom of conscience has any right to exist, it is in love.

* * *

At the present hour, at the point now reached by Western laws and morals, marriage has a false bearing. It generally has for its foundation interest, and not love.

It is most often a contract, and not a mystery; it is a prostitution and not a

celebration; it is slavery and not development.

Hence that revolt of love that is termed adultery.

At the present day, whatever may have been the travail of ideas following upon our many revolutions and all that body of facts which shackle and hold one another in restraint, marriage, adultery, prostitution, are still viewed in a false light.

Marriage is seen where it does not exist, adultery is seen where there is none, prostitution is seen where there is none.

In a number of cases what is called marriage is adultery, and what is called adultery is marriage.

Make marriage a reality, let it spring from nature and from the heart, and these two facts, adultery and prostitution, which are the protest of the heart and the protest of nature, will vanish.

In the actual state of things the irresistible union of two hearts is subject to the tyranny of the law; now what is this union if not marriage? On the other hand the law sanctions the delivery of a woman to

a man as a legal sale made for mutual advantage; what is the consummation of this sale if not adultery and prostitution?

The poem of woman pervades the history of man. Here and there it is a species of sublime song. The two most beautiful of these songs are Mary, mother of God, and Joan of Arc, mother of the people. Two virgins, one of whom gave birth to Christ, the other to France.

* * *

For all poets there is some woman who, unknown to them, performs the half of their works. Molière, happy, would not have written *le Misanthrope*. Molière created Celimene, la Bejart created Alceste.

* * *

Woman, nude, is the blue sky. Clouds and garments are an obstacle to contemplation. Beauty and infinity would be gazed upon unveiled.

In reality it is the same ecstasy: the idea of the infinite proceeds from beauty,

just as the idea of beauty proceeds from infinity. Beauty is nothing else than the infinite contained in a contour.

* * *

No external grace is complete unless it is vivified by interior beauty. The beauty of the soul is spread like a mysterious light over the beauty of the body.

* * *

One loves a woman as one discovers a world, in forever thinking of her.

* * *

Nature has made a pebble and a female. The lapidary makes the diamond, and the lover makes the woman.

* * *

In our society as it is now constructed woman has to attach man to her by a thread; it is necessary, however, that the thread be long, that it unwind almost infinitely in the clever fingers of the woman, and that the man shall never perceive it. He might break it. It sometimes happens that man, coming and going somewhat at hazard, unknowingly drags

the thread through the complicated events of life and gets it entangled with them. The woman then comes noiselessly behind him and, without his perceiving her, delicately detaches the thread from the bushes. Mysterious and delicate operation that women alone know how to perform and which is called saving happiness.

* * *

In a complete woman there ought to be a queen and a servant.

* * *

Woman's heart is held by what it gives; the heart of man is alienated by what it receives.

* * *

Woman is so made that one divines the young mother in the little girl, and one perceives the little girl in the young mother. The first child continues the last doll.

* * *

Without vanity, without coquetry, without curiosity, in a word, without the fall, woman would not be woman. Much of her grace is in her frailty.

When a woman is speaking to you listen to what she says with her eyes.

* * *

One might put on many women the well-known inscription: "There are snares in this property."

* * *

There is a crowd of stupid things that man does not do through idleness, and a crowd of follies that woman does through lack of occupation.

* * *

Too often the history of woman's frailty is also the history of man's infamy.

* * *

Do not insult those unfortunates whom you jostle in the streets. Remember that the most of them have been delivered over to prostitution by hunger and allow themselves to fall into the stream rather than throw themselves into the river.

* * *

It is often necessary to know how to obey a woman in order sometimes to have the right to command her.

In order that a woman may be possest completely almost the impossible is required. These three things are needful: to be a man, a great man and a gentleman; to satisfy her dignity, to content her pride, to flatter her vanity.

There is in George Sand a rare and charming thing, the *bonhomie* of the woman.

* * *

Woman possesses a singular faculty which is made up of real strength and apparent weakness.

* * *

O women! beings fashioned of all our sorrows, of all our joys, of what is most inspiring within us! Veritable Eves taken from our sides! It was to madden us, to fill us with rapture or despair; it was to draw from us words of flame, heart poems, wild deeds, that God painted your eyebrows in shadow and gave you eyes of fire.

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